GENDER AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

ACROSS DIFFERENCE:

CULTURAL DISCOURSES AND EVERYDAY PRACTICES

AMONG SORBS IN GERMANY

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking from the position of author of my dissertation, I wholeheartedly agree with American anthropologist Jane Cowan's perception when she interprets various stages evolving during her study of Greek dance (1990) by having noted "every work bears the imprint of its author". However, for me, every work additionally involves the author's life trajectory which occurs at various moments and in a variety of loci at which the author interconnects and intersects with those he or she writes about. Taking myself as an example, the very point of interconnection between myself and the people under study takes place in the identity construction of an ethnic minority. Writing the ethnography of the Sorbian women with whom I interacted during and after fieldwork can, in a way, be defined as an ongoing journey in which I look for my own identity as a member of the Hakka ethnic minority in my country, Taiwan. The Hakka population of Taiwan is roughly 4,600,000 (ca. 20% of the total population) and is concentrated in northwest counties of Hsinchu, Jhongli and Miaoli as well as in a southwest municipality of Meinong. This is also the initial point of departure for my study on the identity construction of the Sorbs. By relating the various layers of myself which have been partly constituted in the life narrations of those studied, a reconsideration of my identity as Hakka has been required. At the same time, to the best of my belief, people with whom I talked have surely begun to rethink what Sorbian identity means to them after reflecting on my questions.

In this study, the main argument focuses on how Sorbian women, as acting agents, construct their identities in their everyday lives which are interwoven in Sorbian and German cultures. The research subjects, the Sorbs (*Serbja*/*Serby*/*die Sorben*), also known as the Wends (*die Wenden*), are considered to be a social construction whose members ascribe themselves as Sorbs. Their identities are engendered through social interactions, communication and commonalities of experiences while also retaining their particularity at the same time. However, as a given fact in the historiography of the Sorbs and in the variety of brochures and books on the Sorbs, the Sorbs are seen as a West-Slavonic minority living in the region of Lusatia, in the eastern part of Germany. The Sorbian population is usually estimated as numbering approximately 60,000.They are the remaining descendants of a Slavonic people who settled in the areas between the rivers Elbe and Saale and the Oder and Neiße around 600 A.D.. The subjugation of the German king, Henry the First (Heinrich I., 919~936 A.D.), brought Christianization in its wake in the 10th century. Since that time, the Sorbs have been under German rule. Throughout the vicissitudes of Sorbian history, conquest and assimilation by the Germans pervades and is inextricably linked with the suppression and banning of the Sorbian languages (Upper Sorbian and Lower Sorbian, also known as Wendish) and Sorbian cultures, the partition of Lusatia into different ruling lordships (Saxony and Prussia) as the result of the Congress of Vienna 1815 and into two administrative territories (Saxony and Brandenburg), as well as the "dredging of Sorbian culture" caused by the opencast mining for brown coal since early industrialization in the mid-19th century.

Sorbian historiography emphasizes recurring cycles of German oppression and Sorbian revolt. In their fight against assimilation and Germanization, Sorbs have

persistently fought for the preservation and promotion of the Sorbian culture and languages, which has become very essential resistance. On this, Sorbian identity is thus founded. In this context, the Sorbs are unified as a whole. Furthermore, Sorbian nationalist projects channel the development of the Sorbian culture, which is fixed into a solid oneness established in a unity of origin, family, language, customs, traditions and religion. Moreover, in the Sorbian discourse, the Sorbs, Sorbian culture, Sorbian ethnicity, Sorbian identity and Lusatia are hemmed in the conterminous congruence of group, culture and territory within authenticity as a consequence of being regarded as a bounded homogeneous culture. In this sense, Sorbian culture is rendered static, timeless and coherent, and the Sorbian people are thus only seen as bearers and representatives of the Sorbian culture in a Sorbian discourse where nationalist projects are accorded primacy.

In the nationalist and ethnic processes, keeping the group's longevity and maintaining its ethnic boundaries constitute the core of the assignment to be achieved. Women are easily obliged to bear the role of representatives of the ethnic group to which they belong and they are "naturally" regarded as the persons who are held responsible for the transferal of cultural value because they are seen as "nationalist wombs" by being regarded as the biological and cultural reproducers of their ethnic collectivity. In this sense, women are constructed as the symbolic carriers of collective identity and are embodied in the overarching rubric of the nationalist schemes inherent in "authenticity" which is fixed in the cultural fabric of symbols, values, artifacts and modes of behavior. Concretely put, these are, for example, national costumes, behaviors, customs, traditions, cuisine, songs, stories and languages. Under the banner of nationalist and ethnic plans, the fact that women are naturalized and symbolized as cultural guardians actually implies that women are simultaneously excluded as "Others". They are figured in certain cultural codes which monopolize the definition what a "proper woman" should be and do. Moreover, cultural regulations that are vital to the identities of group members overpower women's way of living. Women are "Othered" in the essential framing of culture; meanwhile, their competence as subjects who shape their own lives is veiled. Furthermore, difference among women is rendered invisible in the static understanding of womanhood.

The emergence of the figure of "*serbska mać*" (Sorbian mother) in the context of Sorbian "national rebirth" in the 19th century manifests that Sorbian women are integrated in Sorbian nationalist maneuvers. They are assigned the function of fulfilling imposed regulations and carrying out tasks for the sake of the Sorbs as a collectivity, be these tasks keeping the virtue and health of the family, educating children who are seen as the future of the Sorbian people, passing on traditions, or fostering and preserving the Sorbian language, tradition and culture. The notion of the "*serbska mać*" reveals that Sorbian women are involved in these projects in the name of the Sorbian people, while their national duty in turn objectifies women by putting them in a cultural straitjacket. The embodiment of Sorbian-ness and the Sorbian culture in this gendered label "*serbska mać*" suggests that Sorbian women represent the Sorbian collectivity, both ethnically and culturally. In addition to "*serbska mać*", the construction of womanhood in the public discourse and in widespread views centers on equating women with tradition, language and religion. Pictures in the press and brochures on the Sorbs, in which girls and women dressed in traditional Sorbian costumes participate in

religious ceremonies, are telling examples of this. The way that Sorbian women become cooped up in the framework of Sorbian collectivity as noted above explicates that the concepts of gender and ethnicity are imbued with essentialist ideas: Women are homogenized as the guardians of Sorbian culture and identity, while at the same time, Sorbian culture and identity are frozen in an objective distinction that performs Sorbian-ness, e.g. language, dress, customs, general life styles or fundamental value orientation. In this way, Sorbian women's life experiences, skills and intentions are made oblique and veiled. In the same vein, views on the Sorbs and Sorbian culture become very easily trapped in a static state in which the Sorbs and their culture become petrified as "such-and-such". This linear way of comprehending the intersection of gender and ethnicity in the case of the Sorbs hints at the research subjects in this study, the women who identify themselves as/with the Sorbs, and how they live with an undifferentiated culture and have coherent ways of living with a unitary structure.

For me, attempting to get out of the cul-de-sac caused by an essentialist stance on gender and ethnicity is therefore the main concern of exploration in this study. But this is not my only goal. This study also focuses on why gender and ethnicity are substantialized and essentialized in the case of the Sorbs. However, we should not forget that this question is not merely limited to the case of the Sorbs, but should rather be examined in the broader context of nationalism. A complex set of preliminary inquiries have to be taken into consideration here, such as why are women assigned the biological, cultural and ideological reproduction of the collectivity they belong to? How are women allied with ethnic and nationalist processes? Notwithstanding the focus on women as the main group in question, it would be misleading to claim that this study only centers on women because these questions should also be investigated in the context of gender construction in nationalism. Therefore looking at gender and nationalism will be of help when exploring the above questions. Not only the analysis of gender and nationalism, but also ethnicity and nationalism is crucial for answering the central question here because this will aid us in understanding why, how, in which context and in which process ethnicity emerges. Furthermore, it will provide insight into which nationalist strategies are employed in the creation of an ethnic group as the dominant national central agent, while other groups of people are designated as marginal in the process of nation-building. Does this simultaneously influence our perception of identity, letting us think of it as ethnic or national? These fundamental questions are useful as a point of departure for deconstructing an essentialist standpoint on gender and ethnicity.

The perspective of viewing cultural practices as constructed by experiences in everyday life will be helpful for composing an alternative, renewed scope of the women and their cultures, both gendered and ethnic. This approach of practice relieves people from being conceived as the mere passive objects that carry out the agenda of transmitting cultural values, norms and behaviors, while it also rehabilitates them as actors who produce, reproduce and imbue culture in new terms in their day-to-day lives. By focusing on quotidian life experiences, the ambivalence, conflict, contradiction, difference, inconsistency, diversity and multiplicity involved in women's actions, choices, strategies and negotiation are thus made evident and perceptible. Actors' everyday life experiences achieve vitality in the understanding of them, Sorbian women, and their life worlds because such an approach dismantles the idea of the "cultural

whole" and the isolated oneness rooted in the conventional narrative of Sorbian-ness. The notion of Sorbian identity that is commonly perceived in the "natural composites" of certain fixed criteria, such as origin, family, mother tongue, customs and tradition, village community and history, will accordingly be rendered dynamic. Communication, interaction and relationships with others will play a crucial role in grappling with the construction of Sorbian identity. This is also to suggest that identity construction involves positionings that locate the actors in relations to others. It is a restless process because the actors' subject position varies every single situation, in every single scene of communication with different counterparts, and also reaches across a variety of differences – gender, ethnicity, class etc. – in each spot of interaction. What is more, identity is then verbalized as identification that not only denotes a standing in relation to others, but also signifies a power of redefining. In this sense, Sorbian culture, identity and ethnicity will be re-described in new terms that encompass an active and transformative reconfiguration of different meanings and discourses. If we employ such a view in our understanding of the Sorbs, meaning different groups within the Sorbian community such as women, we will never expect them to act within the framework of Sorbian culture and thus to correspond with their ethnic ascription. Instead, we will see how they incessantly oscillate between positionings and repositionings in a variety of situations and contexts associated with personal biographies, collective histories, cultural experiences, political conjunctures and social relations.

The leading focus of this paper aims to investigate how Sorbian women construct their identities in their everyday lives, which are considered to be a domain where those being researched, as acting agents, consciously and deliberately fashion their lives between and in Sorbian and German cultural contexts. Meanwhile, it is also my purpose to probe into the question of how Sorbian women move across and live with and through differences in this study. In addition to these intentions, there is still a central concern that motivates me to embark on this study: a wish to contribute to studies on the intersection of gender and ethnicity as well as gender studies in the Sorbian academic community. As noted earlier, the organic vision of Sorbian culture and identity has saturated and pervaded Sorbian discourse as the very object of Sorbian nationalist schemes and strategies that focuses on inwardly unifying the Sorbs as a whole and outwardly marking a clear-cut boundary from the Germans so that Sorbian culture can be warded off from destruction and disappearance. Under such circumstances, discussions of internal difference within the Sorbs are scarcely taken into account.

So far, theoretical and empirical research concerning Sorbian women and gender studies has been scant. Sorbian folklore researcher Susanne Hose, who is a member of the academic staff in the Department of Empirical Cultural Research/Ethnography of The Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, provides us with a basis for understanding the question why women's studies has occupied such a marginal space in the Sorbian community in her study "Frauenforschung – kein sorbisches Thema" (Women's Studies – Not a Sorbian Subject) from 1995. According to Hose, there are four reasons as follows: 1) Investigation of the Sorbs, who are defined as an ethnic minority, must retain and reflect their image as a complete unity and collectivity and therefore women's and gender studies are perceived as an incitement and irritation to their research; 2) male Sorbs dominate the research regarding their ethnic groups, i.e.

"*Sorabistik*" (Sorbian Studies on philology and literary studies), and this therefore has much to do with power relations regarding resources for conducting and distributing research, especially financial resources; 3) in Sorbian ethnological studies, female Sorbs are regarded as "objects", for example women are shown in traditional costumes and their names are not revealed, nor is it explained why they wear such costumes and what the connection is between the costumes and the wearers' lives; 4) within the social structure of the Sorbs, the role of preserving and practicing customs is ascribed to women, and they are held responsible for promoting and passing on their ethnic identity to the young generations.

In recent years, new visions have begun to make a difference. Hose not only focuses on Sorbian narrative and proverbs research, she also dedicates herself to exploring the life stories of women, chiefly mothers, in Lusatia. She shows us how female Sorbs, as subjects, reconstruct their own lives through narratives and how they relate their individual life performances to life drafts that influence the expectations of their communities and other patterns of society in Lusatia. These life stories are not representative, but they are nonetheless presented as various ways of perceiving the world. Hose's studies are as follows: "Mythos 'Serbska mać'" (The Myth of the 'Sorbian Mother') (2000), "The Meaning of Work in Life Stories of Women" (2004), and "Das Mutterbild bei den Sorben" (The Image of the Mother in the Sorbian Community) (2004).

The Head of the Department of Empirical Cultural Research/Ethnography of The Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, Elka Tschernokoshewa, who is a Bulgarian native educated in the arts and humanities in Germany and who specializes in the research fields of everyday culture, comparative minorities studies, gender studies, media and communication, has endeavored to bring new perspectives into studies on the Sorbs by advocating that Sorbian culture, ethnicity, and identity should be seen from the perspective of hybridity and difference. She casts a critical eye on homogeneous, coherent and ahistorical views toward understanding the Sorbs. She attempts to unsettle and dislodge the pre-modern images of and primitive associations with the Sorbs and Sorbian culture by putting forward the visions of openness, innovation, modernity, and plurality. In her studies on the Sorbs, she not only illustrates the dynamic, multiple and modern lives of the Sorbs, she also analyzes their gendered life experiences, giving women's culture its vitality. Tschernokoshewa, among others, provides us with a window to observe how women live with and through difference and how women mold their lives in a blended world where the crossover and conflation of multiple identities emerge.

Along with Hose and Tschernokoshewa, their colleague Ines Keller, whose research centers on dress, customs and migration, also investigates the relationship between genders in part of her dissertation *Sorbische und deutsch-sorbische Familien. Drei Generationen im Vergleich* (Sorbian and German-Sorbian Families. Three Generations in Comparison) from 2000. In her study, she observes people from three generations of Sorbian and German-Sorbian families in five Upper Lusatian villages as a case-in-point. As her case studies show, women are subordinate and are held responsible for nurturing and nourishing children, despite also having to work outside the home. German folklore studies expert Brunhilde Miehe also lends fresh relevance to the research of traditional Sorbian costumes in her *Der Tracht treu geblieben. Studien zum regionalen*

Kleidungsverhalten in der Lausitz (Faithful to the Traditional Costume: Studies on Regional Dress Practices in Lusatia) (2003), which is based on 32 case studies. Miehe delves into how Sorbian women treat their traditional costumes and takes the interlinking of time and space into account. Most important of all, she argues that women are not mere wearers of the costumes, but are rather acting agents who live with their costumes in a dynamic process during the course of their lives. The Sorbian art historian Maria Mirtschin, who is currently a member of the academic staff in the Department of Cultural and Social History of The Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, also looks into how Sorbian women who worked as servants and wet nurses were portrayed and represented in the gaze of German artists in paintings from the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (2006, 2007). In Mirtschin's view, the very reason why the figures of Sorbian female servants and wet nurses appear so frequently in these paintings was their traditional costumes. It is their distinctive way of dressing that expresses their ethnic ascription straightaway. In these art works, women are not individuals, but are only considered to be objects attired in colorful traditional costumes which easily attract attention.

Finally, it is vital to point out that this study in no way tries to represent all Sorbs, nor does it mean to stereotype Sorbs as people who do certain things or have certain beliefs. Rather, it is intended as an ethnography of several individual women with whom I interacted during my fieldwork and also during the writing process of this study. Any generalizations about those being studied and their life worlds are rejected because, as I will argue, their life experiences in everyday practices reveal much dynamism, diversity and difference.

CHAPTER 1 MAPPING THE FIELD: THEORY, OBJECTIVES, METHOD

1.1 Gendered Ethnicity – Ethnicized Gender

Why do photographs with the captions "Mädchen in der Festtracht zu Fronleichnam" (Girls in festive costumes for Corpus Christi), "Frauen in Tracht verzieren Ostereier" (Women in traditional costumes decorate Easter eggs), "Alte Dame geht in Sorbisch" (An elderly woman in Sorbian dress) appear frequently in German and Sorbian newspapers (see Tschernokoshewa 2000), informational books on the Lusatia Region and tourist brochures about the Sorbs? Why do people, such as one of women I talked with during my fieldwork, think that women are responsible for the preservation and transferal of the Sorbian language by saying, "If women are not stable, then the language disappears" [1]? As can be seen in these questions of public discourse (media representation in German and Sorbian press), women are associated with tradition (traditional Sorbian costumes, the decoration of Easter eggs), the Sorbian language and they are connected to the Sorbian people and culture. In this sense, women are perceived as the representatives of the Sorbian collectivity and they are reckoned to be carriers of a cultural value that indicates "Sorbian-ness" while maintaining important cultural resources. However, on closer examination, the portrayal of women as the fixed embodiments of ethnic collectivity reveals an isomorphic equation of women with culture. This involves a double-layered process of homogenizing women as *Fremde* (strangers): One layer emerges as a result of the exogenous gaze of the Germans; the other is constructed in the endogenous gaze of the Sorbs themselves. The mutually reinforcing attribution by the Germans and self-identification by the Sorbs petrify differences in gender, ethnicity and culture as ahistorical and a static substance. In this way, Sorbian women are described as cultural reproducers of the Sorbian people and culture and symbolized as the bearers of Sorbian ethnicity, rather than being seen as actual social actors who live their lives and who develop and employ various strategies to cope with their everyday social interactions.

The above gender issue at stake is inextricably entwined with a problematic perception of Sorbian ethnicity. As observed in the expressions mentioned above, the notion of ethnicity is frozen within the essentialist ideas commonly received in distinctive, objective characteristics, such as customs, tradition (including traditional costumes) and language. In this sense, the Sorbs are seen as *one* people whose members are assumed to homogeneously correspond to these unchanging ethnic and cultural traits. In this way, every Sorbian individual, including women, is dismissed in this homogenous view. Simultaneously, such an angle fixes Sorbian ethnicity and culture within certain criteria chosen to mark "Sorbian-ness".

Given the above, the research subjects in this book – Sorbian women – are homogenized and essentialized as the symbolic bearers of Sorbian culture. Their activities and experiences in quotidian life become obscured, not to mention the socially,

[1] Cf. Wenn die Frau nicht stabil ist, dann ist die Sprache weg (interview with Rosemarie, August 17, 2002, in Bautzen). All English translations in this study are by the author. All the names of the interviewees have been changed here in order to protect their privacy.

culturally and historically specific contexts in which each woman is situated. The scope of individual agency disappears. This has a significant bearing on the issue of how women construct their identities. In tackling these concerns, I therefore locate myself in the practice of actively constructing gender and ethnicity whilst pursuing one's day-to-day life. The focal point of this book is therefore spotlighted by the reflection on women's actions, choices, motivations and experiences in their everyday lives. Before embarking on this investigation, however, we need to take a look at why and how women are involved in the ethnic and nationalist projects which serve as an important inchoative point for us to locate the origins of the homogenization and essentialization of gender and ethnicity.

1.1.1 Women as the Key Symbols in Ethnic and Nationalist Processes

In the process of applying a variety of collective strategies oriented towards the building of a political community that homogenizes and substantializes peoplehood, culture, territory and state, for example during nationalism, women usually become invisible. Moreover, the significance of gender is often ignored. This is not only evident in national formations, but also in most studies on nations and nationalism. As has been critically challenged by several feminist scholars who have studied the gendering of nations and nationalisms (e.g. Enloe 1989, Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989, McClintock 1995, Yuval-Davis 1997), the majority of dominant theorizations in this field (such as that of Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990) neither include gender in national process, nor identify gender relations as key analytical concerns for understanding nationalism. This is because, as British feminist sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis criticizes in the introductory chapter of her *Gender and Nation* (1997), most scholars of nationalisms, the "primordialists" (e.g. Geertz 1963, Shils 1957, van der Berghe 1979) have seen in nations a natural and universal phenomenon which is an "automatic" extension of kinship relations (1997: 1). Furthermore, the key actors discussed in the literature on nation-building and national reproduction usually refer to state bureaucracy and intellectuals (Yuval-Davis refers to materialist analyses, such as Amin 1978, Zubaida 1989, Gellner 1983 and Smith 1986) who establish and reproduce national(ist) ideologies and boundaries (1997: 2). Drawing on Carole Pateman (1988), Yuval-Davis further explains why women are usually located outside the nationalist process: The classical theories of "social contract" that have exerted far-reaching influence over and laid the basis for the common sense understanding of western social and political order divide the sphere of civil society into public and private realms (ibid.). Since nations and nationalisms have usually been considered as part of the public political domain and assumed to be natural male characteristics, women (and the family) are seen as publicly politically irrelevant and are thus assigned to the private field.

In his pioneering study *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (1985) which breaks with the well-established theoretical concepts of nation and sexuality as discrete constructs, American historian George L. Mosse verifies this exclusion of women from the public sphere. Mosse delves into the interconnections between European nationalism, bourgeois family morality and sexuality at the end of eighteenth century, exemplified primarily in the case of Germany, but also drawing on Italy, France and England. Mosse identifies the

mutual construction of nationalism and sexuality: Modern nationalism in Europe plays a crucial role in the construction of bourgeois norms of behavior, common decency and sexuality, on the one hand; these codes of middle-class respectability, conversely, were able to stoke the emergence of the fascist nation-state in the twentieth century. At the beginning of his introduction, Mosse clearly points out that the study of the alliance between nationalism and bourgeois morality means following the development of some of the most important norms exerting sustaining influence over our society simultaneously as "ideals of manliness […], and their effect on the place of women; and insiders who accepted the norms, as compared to the outsiders, those considered abnormal or diseased" (1985: 1). Later in his introduction, Mosse elucidates that "nationalism and respectability assigned everyone his place in life, significantly man and woman, normal and abnormal, native and foreigner; any confusion between these categories threatened chaos and loss of control" (1985: 16). This diametrical division is articulated through such stereotypes as, for example, men being associated with depth and seriousness, while women were seen as shallow and frequently as frivolous (1985: 16f.). In the discourse of nationalism, masculinity was idealized as the foundation of the nation and society, while women were simultaneously idealized as guardians of morality and of public and private order (1985: 17).

In Mosse's account, nationalism had a remarkable affinity for male society and was allied to the concept of respectability. Such association legitimatized men's dominance and control over women (1985: 67). This echoes that "all nations depend on powerful constructions of gender", as Anne McClintock, an Associate Professor of English at Columbia University, argues in her *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995). McClintock discerns that nationalism is implicated in gender power. Although numerous nationalists strove for molding a national unity, nations have historically been the same as the approved institutionalization of gender difference (1995: 353). As McClintock further points out, "no nation in the world gives women and men the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-state" (ibid.). Men are the main national agents, while by contrast, women are rejected any direct action as national citizens and subsumed only symbolically into the national body politic as its boundary and metaphoric limit (1995: 354). Yet, as Yuval-Davis argues, women were always in the national arena and they were central to the constructions and reproductions of nations and nationalism. In their early writing *Women-Nation-State* (1989), Yuval-Davis and the co-editor Floya Anthias identify five major ways in which women participate in ethnic and national processes and stand in relation to state practices: 1) as biological reproducers of members of ethnic of ethnic collectivities; 2) as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups; 3) as central participants in the ideological reproduction of collectivity and as transmitters of its culture; 4) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences – as a focus and a symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories; 5) as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles (1989: 7).

Despite women's involvement and implication in nations and nationalism, as Yuval-Davis put it, they are usually located in ambivalent positions within collectivities (1997: 47). On the one hand, they are integrated in nationalist projects and assigned to carry out imposed regulations which contribute to the group's longevity and to maintaining

their ethnic or national boundaries, for instance by maintaining traditional costumes, behavior, customs, cuisine, songs, stories, and certainly the language of their community, while passing on ideas, beliefs and practices to their children. On the other hand, however, women are excluded from the collective "we" of the body politic and must therefore maintain an object position, i.e. they are not acknowledged as subjects, but seen as "others". In this sense, the construction of womanhood is based on the essence of otherness (ibid.). For example, strict cultural codes are usually developed to define what a "proper woman" is, while keeping women in inferior positions of power within these cultural regulations, which are central to the identities of group members (ibid.). Furthermore, women become the excluded and inferior Other in formulations of so-called collective "wisdom" used to justify the subjugation of women, e.g. "women are stupid", "women are dangerous", "women are impure and could pollute us" (ibid.). When women figure as Others, it suggests that, on the one hand, they are fixed and stagnant in the essential framing of culture, while on the other hand, their difference is rendered invisible in the static understanding of gender relations. The latter implies a larger domain of meaning that connotes an ignorance of women's different historical and social development, life experiences and skills. In other words, the cultures of women and women's way of living have been veiled (Tschernokoshewa 2001: 68).

In the case of the Sorbs, the coinage of the notion "*serbska mać*" (Sorbian mother) in the context of the Sorbian "national rebirth" in the 19th century is a telling example of the paradoxical involvement of women in nationalist projects. On the one hand, the idealization of motherhood embodied in the term of "*serbska mać*" expects Sorbian women to be "national actors" (mothers, educators of future generations and guardians of Sorbian culture) and to perform the "ethnic duty" of passing on "Sorbian-ness" (the authenticity of which is reified by language and tradition) in the family and ensuring its preservation. On the other hand, Sorbian women are "Othered" as objects within the framework of nationalist projects, as their conduct is prescribed within a culturally acceptable norm, significantly under patriarchy. That is to say, the process of constructing ethnicity or nationhood involves not only a specific notion of womanhood, but certainly of manhood as well. In ethnic and national projects, women rank second, whereas virile fraternity and brotherly companionship achieve centrality. In this sense, masculinity exerts pressure and force on femininity. This implies an imbalance in gender relations in national projects.

The subject of "woman" is employed as a normatively ascribed status in the frame of the national project in which subjugated ethnic minorities constitute their versions of culture and tradition, for instance, by accentuating the significance of preserving their mother tongue. The fact that women are cast in the role of carrying out this duty for the sake of the existence and longevity of their ethnic group or nation is not only contingent on the construction of a patriarchal family as the source of national beliefs, but also on dichotomous gender categories. In nationalist projects, the family has double connotations: First, as noted in Mosse's analysis, the fixed gender roles expressing the family ideal and women's position as a public national symbol (as the guardian of the continuity and immutability of the nation) reinforce one another (1985: 18). Particularly the small nuclear family based on sentiment developed during the same time as the emergence of nationalism and respectability (ibid.). The nuclear family remained patriarchal and gender roles became more sharply defined than in the larger unit

defined by kinship; industrialization and the division of labor were crucial for this, because business and home were spatially separated (ibid.). The nuclear family emerged as a modern form, notably not as an outcome of the process of modernization, but, conversely, as a condition and basis for modernization (Rener & Ule 1998: 120). Moreover, the family remained pre-modern with dichotomous gender categories in which women were assigned to domestic, private space. At the same time, women were made to be mothers and wives. This went hand in hand with the shaping of modern nation-states (see ibid.). As noted earlier, the formation of nation-states and the construction of gender roles (especially the female gender) are mutually constitutive. Remarkably, both of them are produced in modernity, but are still molded as pre-modern: sentiment embodied in the abstract community and the national imagination makes members of the nation feel attached to their fellows (see ibid.). In other words, this articulates their sentiment of feeling that all of them belong to one large family. This is also the second point that I want to make in the following.

In the nationalist discourse, family bespeaks a metaphoric kinship. For instance, the metaphor *pater familias* symbolizes the members of the nation as a large family or in other familiar terms such as "the fatherland" or "the mother country". In nationalist projects, the substantialization of nations and states reinforces its members' sentiment and structures their feelings toward nations and states through the idiom of kinship (see Alonso 1994: 384ff.). In this way, the "national" and the familial intermingle. Furthermore, the family is intended to mirror state and society (Mosse 1985: 19). According to Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823~1897), the founder of *Volkskunde* (ethnology) as an academic discipline in Germany (*Die Volkskunde als Wissenschaft*, 1858), in the third volume *Die Familie* (The Family)[2] of his work *Naturgeschichte des Volkes* (Natural History of the People) (1855), "through the rule of the father as patriarch, the family educated its members to respect authority: 'the German state will harvest the fruit sown by such a family'" (Mosse 1985: 19f.). Furthermore, kinship tropes not only substantialize hierarchical social relations and imbue them with sentiment and morality, but they also naturalize and objectify relations of gender and sexuality (see ibid.). Riehl's account is an evident example here agian. He accorded importance in the hierachic structure of family as it maintained the order that every member was assigned his place and tasks in family. Moreover, he saw the hierarchic gender relations – women subordinated to men's will – as being regulated by God. He broke down the concept of gender into "public and private" domains: the "state is male"[3] (Riehl 1855: 5, quoted in Lipp 2001: 335) and "men create state life, while the innermost home life was almost always determined by women"[4] (Riehl 1855: 21, quoted in Lipp 2001: 335). His standpoint gives women the status of appendages that have no self-reliant personalities but are instead defined by the family. He further stated, "A Woman works in the family, for the family, she gives the family her best; she educates her children, she lives the life of her husband"[5] (Riehl 1855: 96, quoted in

[2] Translation by the author. All German language titles referred to in this book are also translated into English by the author.
[3] Cf. Der Staat ist männlichen Geschlechts.
[4] Cf. Männer schufen staatliches Leben, während des innerste Leben des Hauses fast immer bestimmt (wurde) durch die Frau.
[5] Cf. Das Weib wirkt in der Familie, für die Familie, es bringt ihr sein Bestes zum Opfer dar; es erzieht die Kinder, es lebt das Leben des Mannes mit.

Lipp 2001: 336).

Naturalized, dichotomous and hierarchical gender relations, as seen in Riehl's study, which emerges against the background of the social and economical developments in the nineteenth century, exerted a lasting influence on the theoretical assumptions in the anthropology of women (Moore 1988: 12, 22). American anthropologists Sherry Ortner's first piece of feminist writing "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" (1974: 67-87) and Michelle Z. Rosaldo's publication *Woman, Culture and Society* (1974) are examples of this. In these works, the scope of the dichotomy between men and women is conceived in two sets of binary oppositions: culture versus nature, and public versus domestic. This dichotomous ordering of gender relations within the context of studying women's subordination have come under criticism on the grounds that these metaphors generalize, homogenize and disregard the diversity of different societies in which such classifications, the oppositional models of culture/nature and public/domestic, cannot be found. In other words, binary gender symbolism as such is a fallacy of ethnocentricism, universalism and androcentricism. Between the end of 1970s to the end of 1980s, women's studies veered toward gender studies, and the anthropology of women [6] has also transformed into gender studies. This change signifies that women are no longer seen in isolation as the Other. Instead gender studies incorporates a relational moment in which women are placed in relation to the concepts of masculinity and the forms in which masculinity manifests itself and is organized in culture and society [7] (Lipp 2001: 334). Furthermore, gender is not conceived as biological given, but is rather understood as a product of social configuration and cultural construction (Ortner & Whitehead 1981).

1.1.2 Conceptualizing Gender

The above discussions concerning the dichotomous conceptions of gender relations based on the analysis of sexual stereotypes and gender symbolism provide us with a helpful point of reference for recognizing the basis on which women are naturalized as the mothers of their national and ethnic groups and symbolized as the representatives of their people and culture in ethnic and nationalist projects. This deviates, however, from my goal of studying the identity construction of Sorbian women in their everyday life, as I rather aim to dismantle the female life worlds and gendered life experiences that were muted and invisible under the banner of Sorbian nationalist projects and that a small number of researchers of Sorbian society have tried to make visible and audible as well in recent years, such as Elka Tschernokoshewa and Susanne Hose, among others. Moreover, the historical elision of women from the conventional Sorbian discourse and ethnographic studies in the Sorbian academic community, which are imbued with male dominance, motivated me to embark upon this study of Sorbian women.[8]

[6] The trailblazer of the women's anthropology was Margaret Mead, whose research pivots on the intercultural comparisons of women's roles.

[7] Cf. Frauen wurden nicht mehr isoliert als die Anderen betrachtet, sondern Geschlechterforschung umfasste ein relationales Moment, das Frauen in Bezug setzte zu Männlichkeitsvorstellungen und den Erscheinungs- und Organisationsformen des Männlichen in Kultur und Gesellschaft.

[8] This deliberation is similar to the development of women's studies and gender studies in anthropology. However, in her *Dance and the Body Politic in Northern Greece* (1990), in which gender is a key concept,

As a consequence of the above consideration, I have chosen the practical approach of understanding gender in this study. In a word, I focus on what the women "do" in their everyday life. I have drawn inspiration from the US-American "practice theory" of cultural anthropology. In her article "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties" (1984), Sherry Ortner propounds "practice" as a new paradigm of cultural anthropology in which the inchoation of its research focus is not founded on the assumption that culture exerts a determinist influence over human action, but rather how culture is produced, reproduced, broadened, modified or changed by human action. From a feminist and more generally subaltern perspective, such as from the standpoint of minorities and postcolonialism, practice theory is seen by Ortner as the idea expressed in the title of *Making Gender* (1996). Her purpose is to place practice theory more fully in the orbit of feminist and other subaltern theorizing, partly because these perspectives themselves often fall into one trap or the other. On the one hand, there is too much construction – this also seems forced, for example applying the methodology of textual analysis of forms of difference, kinds of identities and subject positions are set up within the framework of a given cultural, ideological or discursive formation (1996: 1). On the other hand, there is too much "making". The "making" comes from the agent's viewpoint and it may, in the end, produce the same old cultural construction – "reproduction". The methodology here is mainly ethnographic, analytic and deconstructionist – it is about looking at and listening to real people doing real things in a given historical moment, past or present, and trying to figure out how what they are doing or have done will or will not reconfigure the world they live in (1996: 2). Therefore, Ortner sees practice theory as the only framework for theorizing a necessary dialectic between the two extremes.

Practice theory plays a significant role in teasing out the constellations of agency in the case of Sorbs. As noted earlier, Sorbian women are symbolically essential to the ideological reproduction of Sorbian collectivity and the boundaries separating Sorbian-ness and German-ness. Through these prescribed categories, Sorbian women become fixed as embodiments of Sorbian culture and are crafted as a homogenous group with a uniformed way of living. The approach of looking at practice, however, not only frees those women I study from the role of passive bearers of their culture, but revitalizes them as social actors whose everyday gendered social relations take place in various domains such as housework, job, family, child care and so forth.

Looking at agency helps us to assess how Sorbian women actively handle, reproduce and transform culture in their life world. It has to be noted, however, that neither structure nor system should be left out of consideration when studying women's lives because practice and system are mutually dependent in the interaction of everyday life with external context, and agency with structure (see Römhild 1998: 21). The following therefore also applies:

American anthropologist Jane Cowan voices the following criticism: "one problem is that in too many ethnographic and subdisciplinary areas the study of gender has remained, as it necessarily began, conflated into and equated with the study of women" (1990: 7). As she further points out, the problem lies not in that women are "overstudied" and men are "understudied" in gender studies, but rather gender is seen as centering exclusively on either sex (ibid.). In this sense, the concepts of men and women become isolated from each other. For Cowan, "it is only when gender is examined as a relational reality, when 'being/becoming a woman' and 'being/becoming a man' are recognized as mutually constitutive processes, that a feminist perspective generates its most powerful critical insights" (ibid.).

> […] modern practice theory seeks to explain the relationship(s) that obtain between human action, on the one hand, and some global entity which we may call "the system," on the other. Questions concerning these relationships may go in either direction – the impact of the system on practice, and the impact of practice on system. (Ortner 1984: 148)

Avtar Brah, a Ugandan of Indian descent who is scholar of studies on gender, ethnicity and race and teaches at Birkeck College, University of London, suggests that the individual biography inscribed on personal experiences cannot be read in isolation from the historically variable experiences articulated in economic, political and cultural processes, and the opposite also applies (1996: 116f.). The life experiences of Sorbian women in the practices of daily lives during Socialism are an illustration of this. Particularly the construction of womanhood and motherhood in the former Eastern Germany in the domains of work, housework and child care exerts influence on their identity formation. However, within a structure, the individual is not fixed firmly as a passive recipient, but is rather an acting agent who actively deals with his or her particular situation (see Hannerz 1992: 65). Social actors' intentional actions thus produce and reproduce culture and society.

In addition to approaching the concept of gender from the point of view of practice theory as I have described above, it should also be noted that I also understand gender as a relational category in this study. In her discussion on gender studies and women's studies in German ethnology, Carola Lipp, currently Professor at the University of Göttingen and one of the first scholars in women's study in ethnology in Germany, identifies the notion of gender as

> […] the question of how the material and social structures, normative guideline and social behavior patterns, values and rules defining the cultural conception of culture and gender – the question of to what extent gender specific patterns of signification were filtered through socio-cultural factors such as class, ethnicity, age and educational background, and how the people are woven into this intertwining of signification and regulations. [9](2001: 344)

Inferring from Lipp's stance on the interrelationship between gender and other socio-cultural ingredients, gender is shot through by other categories, such as ethnicity and class. The opposite is also the case: Other categories are gendered (See Hess & Lenz 2001: 28). This is to say that gender cannot be observed in isolation, but rather analyzed in connection with other forms of difference. Further, it is important to ask under which circumstances these categories are relevant, in which context gender acts as the central principle of ordering and when it plays a secondary role (Heinz 1993: 39). In this sense, gender is no longer a unitary category, but is rather expressed variably in different situations. Moreover, it is not a homogenized constellation, as difference can also be found within gender (see Hauser-Schäublin & Röttger-Rössler 1998: 17; Arbeitsgruppe

[9] Cf. [...] die Frage, wie materielle und soziale Strukturen, normativen Vorgaben und gesellschaftliche Verhaltensmuster, Wertvorstellungen und Regeln die kulturelle Auffassung von Kultur und Geschlecht bestimmten. [...] inwieweit geschlechtsspezifische Deutungsmuster durch soziokulturelle Faktoren wie Klasse, ethnische Zugehörigkeit, Alter und Bildungsgrad gefiltert wurden und in welcher Weise handelnde Personen in dieses Geflecht von Bedeutung und Regeln verwoben waren.

Ethnologie Wien 1989: 17f.). In other words, the difference in women's historical, social and cultural experiences cannot be passed over unnoticed. As can be seen in the case of the Sorbs, we must be aware that rural women, for instance, have different life experiences than upper-class women working in urban surroundings; a single mother has somewhat different views on motherhood than women who have the support of their spouses in terms of child care; the women I interviewed who identify themselves as East German women experience twofold differences in ideas of womanhood and motherhood: First, their own life experiences in socialism and post-socialism; second, their difference in relation to West German women.

In addition to the difference within one gender category, there is a "difference between" gender categories, implying that "women" and "men" are neither diametrically opposed nor mutually exclusive; rather they are dynamically propelled and situationally constructed (Hauser-Schäublin & Röttger-Rössler 1998: 17). Difference between genders is of importance to studying the notion of gender. In this study, significantly the analysis of how Sorbian women are assigned to be cultural reproducers in nationalist projects, which will be carefully explored in Chapter 2, involve the construction of gender difference. As discussed earlier (Chapter 1.1.1), the phenomenon that Sorbian women are constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation suggests that men are agents in the nationalist scenario. The empirical material based on women's experiences and practices in everyday life in this book is more about the exploration of women's multifarious and dynamic processes of constructing identities and aims at dismantling the homogenous and essential ethnic and cultural jail in which Sorbian women become fixed. In most parts of this study, I therefore focus much more on difference within one gender category.

In sum, gender is approached here from the dimension of practice and is conceived as a relational category in this book. Difference within one gender category is taken into account in the study of how the women I interviewed construct their identities in their day-to-day life. With this in mind, the women who participated in this study will not be symbolized and naturalized as fixed embodiments of Sorbian culture and ethnicity within the framework of ethnic and nationalist projects, but rather revealed as acting agents who are actual people, do real things. Their gendered life experiences will thus be rendered visible and will be exposed as multiplicities of identity construction analyzing gender in relation to other social categories. As a result, the term "Sorbian women" will not be seen as a unified whole, but will rather include the internal gendered difference as a continually constituted and reconstituted creation and production of a social and cultural process.

1.1.3 Conceptualizing Ethnicity

The "conventional" understanding of ethnicity as language, tradition, customs and the like is widespread in the general population and is particularly popular among minority ethnic groups, such as the Sorbs. The category of "language" is always especially highlighted in the public and private construction of ethnic identity. For instance, reports with such headlines as "protecting our language", "maintaining our mother tongue" and so forth are repeatedly run in the Upper-Sorbian newspaper *Serbkse*

Nowiny.[10] Among the ordinary people I talked to during fieldwork, this "language" issue was without exception raised in every discussion, regardless of whom I was talking to, including employees in the Sorbian Institute, and temporary staff and teachers in the International Summer School in Sorbian Language and Culture[11]. The claim "we are afraid that we will lose our Sorbian-ness if we don't maintain our Sorbian language" was repeated emphatically, which suggests language is often chosen as one of the most outstanding characteristics and necessary components of being Sorbian. The exploration of why these fundamental concepts are exemplified in the "conservation of language" needs first to be approached through the question of how the concept of ethnicity is analyzed in cultural anthropology.

According to the conventional ethnological point of view, there is an inherent assumption that all members of a specific culture are identically committed to that culture. This means that people are seen as bearers and/or representatives of their respective culture. Furthermore, establishing legitimizing perspectives requires that ethnologists focus only on a small group of the population in their research. Therefore, by tackling issues concerning a culture and its members, researchers understand culture as a local shaping of people's behaviors. It also connotes that those being studied are pictured as having a common culture, while the opposite also applies: The culture is distinguishable because of certain group of people. Under such circumstances, a culture, the people sharing that culture, ethnicity, and ethnic or cultural identity become strung together in conterminous congruencies of group, culture and territory and become hedged within the fence of the authenticity resulting from the closed homogeneous culture. This coincidence is undoubtedly seen as a "naturalizing" consequence (Welz 1994: 67).

The above conceptualization of members of a specific culture as bounded and isolated units and their shared culture as the basis of their ethnic identity are drawn against the background of the earlier ethnological studies of non-Western peoples. Such theorization was opposed by the challenging standpoint that displaces common objective cultural content as distinctively constituent from other groups and rather focuses on the social organization and the boundaries which demarcates the group, for example in the Chicago School, Edmund Leach's study on the Kachin in Upper Burma (1954) and in the Manchester School's research in Copperbelt (in former Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia) (Eriksen 2002 [1993]: 37). However, unlike his predecessors, Norwegian social anthropologist Fredrik Barth has played a crucial part in shifting the theoretical and empirical concerns in the anthropology of ethnicity. Barth's influential book *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969a), among others, contributed to the terminology switch in anthropology: The term "tribe", for example, was replaced with "ethnicity" and "ethnic group" (R. Cohen 1978: 380). This also marks an epochal change in how a group under study was understood because the term "ethnic" bespeaks social relationship and mutual contact. In this sense, ethnic groups are no longer equated with cultural units.

[10] On the grounds of having moderate knowledge of Sorbian language, I can only read its monthly German edition, which has printed from 2002 to 2006. On the ground of short of financial aids, *Serbske Nowiny* has ceased publication of it German edition since January 2007. Its Sorbian edition is circulated daily.

[11] Since 1992 the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen has run a three-week course in Sorbian during summer vacation every two years.

For Barth, such a formulation as "a race = a culture = a language and a society = a unit" keeps us from acknowledging the phenomenon of ethnic groups and their place in society and culture because this traditional prejudicial idea suggests what the substantial factors in the genesis, structure and function of such a group may be. According to Barth,

> [this] limits the range of factors that we use to explain cultural diversity: we are led to imagine each group developing its cultural and social form in relative isolation, mainly in response to local ecologic factors, through a history of adaptation by invention and selective borrowing. This history has produced a world of separate peoples, each with their culture and each organized in a society which can legitimately be isolated for description as an island to itself. (1969a: 11)

Such an essentialist, linear relationship between culture, society and group not only renders internal cultural variety invisible, but also allows the sharing of a common culture to be misconceived as a fundamental feature of an ethnic unit. Indeed, a shared common culture is the result of ethnic group organization rather than the basis for the existence of ethnic collectivity. In Barth's view, an ethnic group is a form of social organization – acting agents utilize ethnic identities to differentiate themselves from others for the purpose of interaction, and in this organizational sense, an ethnic group is formed. What forms ethnic identity are not cultural differences, but rather social interaction in and between groups; neither "objective" distinctions and overt signals, such as language, dress, customs, nor general life styles or basic value orientation are considered to be the causes of ethnic dichotomies, but rather ascription, which the acting agents themselves consider to be important. Barth sums this up in two points. First, the nature of the continuity of the ethnic group becomes clear when ethnic collectivity is defined as ascriptive and exclusive: "it depends on the maintenance of a boundary" (1969a: 14). More emphatically, it is "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff it encloses" (1969a: 15). By concentrating on the dimension of ascription, the difficulties caused by the potential changes in and transformation of cultural features and cultural contents are resolved. Barth's second point is that it is social boundaries that define the ethnic group, not the obvious, diacritical "objective" differences as noted earlier. This means that members' overt behaviors are of less significance; instead it is in the process of social interaction with others that group members declare themselves, with their will as subjects, as part of a certain group. At this point, the criteria for determining membership and the ways of signaling inclusion and exclusion are spelled out, and their ethnic identity is thus articulated (ibid.).

Ethnic identity, according to Barth, emerges both from self-ascription and from attribution by others. Moreover, as illustrated in Barth's study on the Pathans inhabiting adjoining areas of Afghanistan and West Pakistan (1969b), ethnic identities constructed through identification and differentiation in the process of social interaction are not fixed, but rather flexible, changeable and situational. Situationalism thus features as one of Barth's significant contributions to the study of ethnicity. Although Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954) and Michael Moreman's work on the Lue in Thailand (1965, 1968) preceded Barth's, the idea of situationalism has been extensively acknowledged in anthropology since Barth's work in the 1970s (Verdery 1994: 35f.).

For instance, anthropologist Ronald Cohen confirms that "ethnicity is first and foremost situational" (1978: 388). As R. Cohen further argues, "the interactive situation is a major determinant of the level of inclusiveness employed in labeling self and others" (ibid.). In different situations, the same person can be categorized according to different criteria of relevance, for example, in one situation, occupation is decisive, in another occasion, education is crucial, in yet another, ethnicity is significant (ibid.). Situation is the focal point of situational ethnicity. This point is particular important for this study, as it allows me to distance my analysis from the conventional Sorbian discourse which is deeply implicated in substantializing the Sorbian ethnicity as a given fact. Situationalism facilitates the insight that ethnic identity is not fixed and static; moreover, it is important to be aware that the same person can have multiple identities in the course of his or her life.

However, as R. Cohen reminds us, it is necessary to delve into which factors determine the qualities and variation of ethnic differences as long as we do not deem its emergence and persistence as an arbitrary event in any particular instance (1978: 389). Ethnic identity therefore should be understood in relation to each social context. Iraq-born British social anthropologist Abner Cohens's study on ethnicity (e.g.1969, 1974) is a telling example of this. A. Cohen sees ethnicity as an instrument in the competition for scarce resources. He describes ethnicity as political and identifies it as a specific form of informal political organization where cultural boundaries are articulated so that the group's resources can be protected. Ethnic identity, in A. Cohen's view, varies accordingly in response to the particular needs of political mobilization and functional organization. This is also what R. Cohen (1978: 385f.) and A. Cohen (1974: xii-xv) criticized Barth for: defining ethnic ascription as a categorical ascription "when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background" (Barth 1969a: 13).

In addition to the above disagreement, Barth and the Scandinavian school centering on situational identity and social interaction has been criticized for exceedingly accentuating individual choice, thereby overlooking external pressures and oppression (Eriksen 2004: 162). Moreover, Barth takes the view that "actors use identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction" (1969a: 13f.), but he actually does not say much about the attribution by others, which involves a power relationship between groups (Jenkins 1994). This is evident in the case of racial minorities in which members are not really free to choose their identities in each situation (Verdery refers to the counterarguments on situationalism 1994: 36). However, the external constraints, which can be regarded as a form of attribution by others, are still a crucial factor in the formation of ethnic identity. If we take the Sorbian nationalist project as an example (in Chapter 2), in response to the German assimilation in the course of history, the construction of the Sorbian collective consciousness founded on selected shared cultural features entails that ethnicity is employed as a strategy to counteract and exterior offence. In this sense, ethnicity is also an intentional act with which the social group, such as the Sorbs, can stabilize, verify, guard and improve their ethnic identity consciously while achieving and realizing their social aims. At the same time, ethnicity here entails a political connotation. This is what German cultural anthropologist Ina-Maria Greverus' terms "*Identitätsmanagement*" (identity management) (1981), which focuses on the functionalization and mobilization of

ethnicity. *Identitätsmanagement* involves an organizational aspect and includes the constellations of manipulation and dependence (Abhängigkeitskonstellationen) of those managed (1981: 224). Greverus states that individuals are both acting agents and objects of management who intend to create a "we-consiousness" across internal (social, cultural, economic) difference by employing a variety of strategies.

Notably, this construction of collective consciousness points out that ethnicity, as do individual experiences and practices in the interethnic interaction and social relationship as noted previously, also deals with a large-scale level of ethnicity, which is implicated in the production and reproduction of we-consciousness in the public arena.[12] Therefore, it can be asserted that ethnicity is a complex interweaving of organizational aspects and interpersonal interaction. In his 1994 essay "Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity", Barth rethinks the term "ethnicity" by looking at the foundations laid in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* in 1969. Barth elucidates three interpenetrating levels of the construction of ethnicity (1994a: 20-30): 1). A micro level focuses on people and interpersonal interaction. This level is needed to model the processes effecting experience and the formation of identities. On this level, individuals are constrained through the intervention from other levels. The external limitations and parameters constitute a lived context for each individual's activities and interpretations. In turn, what develops on this micro level lays the foundations for and produces the bewilderments that again feed back on the median and macro levels; 2) On a median level, the process of creating collectivities and mobilizing groups for various purposes by miscellaneous means achieves its centrality. Symbols and stereotypes are (re)produced, represented and controlled through leadership and ideology. Processes on this level intervene to limit and compel the individual's expression and action on the level of interpersonal interaction (micro level). On this level, many aspects of the boundaries and dichotomies of ethnicity are molded; 3) A macro level deals with state policies. Bureaucracies allocate rights and impediments according to formal criteria, but also undertake force and compulsion arbitrarily. Ideologies are articulated and imposed on this level in which public information and discourse are controlled and manipulated. Along with bureaucracies, global discourses, transnational and international organizations are also the main agents on this level which frequently articulates closely with interests on the median level.

In her *Die Macht des Ethnischen: Grenzfall Rußlanddeutsche. Perspektiven einer politischen Anthropologie* (The Power of Ethnic: The Case of Russian-Germans. Perspectives of Political Anthropology) (1998), German cultural anthropologist Regina Römhild carefully and thoroughly argues, ethnicity pertains to the endogenous aspect of ethnic identity-building, i.e. the self-ascribed ethnic identity (1998: 150ff.). However, there is another aspect of ethnicity, and that is "ethnicization" (German equivalence "Ethnisierung"), which connotes the exogenous factors of ethnic identity-building, meaning the attribution of ethnic identity (1998: 141ff.). Römhild elucidates "ethnicization" in the context of a society of immigration dealing with immigrants from other countries. This strategy of ascription of the receiving society aims to keep immigrants out of the majority group. Moreover, this maneuver of exclusion implies a dialectic process in which "the ethnicization of the minorities encourages the ethnic

[12] This part is related to the construction of Sorbian community, which will be explored in detail in Chapter 1.2.1., particularly with a focus on ethnicity and nationalism.

unity of the majority, and this in turn confirms a national consciousness on the part of the minorities"[13] (Römhild is referring here to Bukow 1992: 141). The common attributes of "ethnicization" and "ethnicity" are based on the processes of homogenization and differentiation – the group constructs itself as an ethnic unit and creates an enclosed and unified "inside" while splitting off from the different "outside" (1998: 152). In reaction to ethnicization, immigrants, who are part of a disfavored ethnic minority in the receiving society, go back to their own origins by affirming and enhancing an ethnic belonging that is burdened with inferiority after failing to become assimilated in the host society (see Ha 2000). Placing importance on a group's "we-consciousness" and highlighting ethnic identity are therefore exposed as significant social functions in their lives. This can be seen as an expression of self-ethnicization and ethnicized self-interpretation (see Bommes & Scherr 1991). However, in the process of self-ethnicization, the over-emphasis of Self grows into "ethnic narcissism" because ethnic identity becomes constructed as a "survival strategy" for self defense (Ha 2000: 379). In this sense, the culture and ethnic identity on which self-assertion and self-ascertainment are based constrain and confine group members. The relationship between "ethnicization" and "ethnicity" is one of mutual reinforcement and interwoven contextualization. Ethnicity becomes more significant in the sense of a collective self-organization and self-understanding in a subjugated ethnic group, especially when not acknowledged by the dominant majority.

The discussion so far has shown that the category of the ethnic group has been revealed to be a form of social organization. Ethnicity and ethnic identity are regarded as relating to the social organization of cultural difference. They are employed in relation to different social contexts; for instance, the social group transforms ethnicity into an intentional act in order to achieve their social existence. Moreover, ethnic identity is not limited to rigid primordial descriptions and obvious diacritical features (such as language, tradition, customs and so on), but is rather constructed in a dialectic process of ethnicization and ethnicity. However, in accepted, traditional ethnology, the notions of "group", "culture" and "territory" converge into a solid congregation – culture and ethnic groups are coupled with each other to form a unit which should ideally be termed "territorial unity" (Römhild 1998: 137). This is where the dialectic between culture and the ethnic unit has already been clarified (as noted earlier); the question of how the element "territory" should be interpreted in the process of ethnic boundary maintenance, however, still needs to be resolved. As Barth (1969) argues, when interacting with others socially, a group maintains its identity, and this interaction entails the incorporation and exclusion of membership. He assumes that this social boundary may have territorial counterparts, but he also states that "ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories; and the different ways in which they are maintained, not only by a once-and-for-all recruitment but by continual expression and validation" (1969: 15). In other words, ethnicity, the ethnic group and its processes of boundary maintenance are produced in constantly changing shapes and directions, and they are generated "under particular interactional, historical, economic and political circumstances: they are highly situational, not primordial" (Barth 1994: 12).

[13] Cf. Die Ethnisierung der Minderheiten die ethnische Geschlossenheit der Mehrheit fördert, was wiederum auf der Seite der Minderheiten ein nationales Bewusstsein bestätigt sieht.

From Barth's standpoint, the notion of "territory" is obviously not the most essential factor for the formation of ethnic groups. And yet we must ask the question why are concepts related to territory such as "homeland" emphasized in the common, widespread understanding of ethnicity and in ethnic and national discourses? Marking off Lusatia as the homeland of the Sorbs in the process of the nation building and identity work of the Sorbs is a telling example of this. This is where Römhild's analysis of "territory" (1998: 20f.) comes into play. Römhild's concept of "territory" is premised on the definition of the cultural practice of everyday life. "Territory" is absolutely not an enclosed and exclusively inhabited territory, but rather signifies concrete places where the everyday life of humans takes place. It leaves visible signals, and at the same time it encounters signals of social power distribution which are left behind in everyday life. Römhild emphasizes that the notion "territory" must signify plurality in this respect: Widely differentiated and variegated activities of everyday life overlap, and each territory of everyday life thus connects with the other. Through diverse and multifarious migratory movement, remote territories, which were originally separated from each other, and their signs become interrelated with each other. Therefore, the territory of everyday life in the present is not an enclosed and isolated system, but a global network that is mutually intersected and affected by actions and communication. The territory of everyday life, which humans fashion collectively, meets the need of humans for security, action and identification in a particular socio-cultural influenced territory. This territory of daily life is then made into a "homeland" or "territory of identity". However, it is often all too easily assumed that "homeland" possesses an irreducible essence, especially when seen in close alignment with culture and ethnic grouping. But as Römhild has shown us, "homeland" is constructed by social actors (agents), whose experience in a real living territory plays a part in the constitution of cultural practice. Taking it a step further, the construction of homeland can be extended to apply to the practices of acting agents who actively create and produce social situations in connection with their "homeland" outside of the original region of settlement (see Moosmüller 2002). Extraterritorial "home" organizations are pertinent examples of this, as "homeland" also gives expression to the social interactions and social relationships between ethnic peers (see Huber 1999).

In conclusion, by applying the fundamental assumptions of ethnicity inherent in the viewpoint described above to the research subjects in this study, I regard the Sorbs as those who ascribe this identity to themselves, treating them as a social organization. Sorbian ethnicity is not only considered to be a strategy of organizing social interaction in and between groups, but also an intentional act with a political connotation for the construction of a collective we-consciousness. The employment of Sorbian ethnicity and the emergence of Sorbian identity vary in different contexts. Ethnic identity is seen as constructed in a dynamic process of ethnicization and ethnicity, a process in which self-ascription, which includes ethnicized self-interpretation and attribution by others, emerges in the social interactions between the Sorbs and the non-Sorbs, and within the personal development of the Sorbs themselves. Seen in this light, the Sorbs, Sorbian culture and ethnicity are not understood as primordial congregations in a linear relationship, but rather as ensuing products of construction. Furthermore, "Sorbian Lusatia" is not regarded as a naturalized constituent of Sorbian identity, rather I focus on how Lusatia is constructed as "Sorbian homeland" because "homeland" is informed

by the understanding of discourse as emerging from the cultural practice of everyday life. Seen from this stance, the notion of homeland eschews the confinement of a bounded place and is instead constructed in the interactions, relationships of the social actors involved and their construction of social situations associated with "home". This point of view will therefore provide an analytical window to the Sorbian organizations outside of Lusatia in the last chapter of this book.

1.1.4 Intersections of Gender and Ethnicity

As said earlier in this chapter, the double disadvantage where Sorbian women are caught relates to the way in which gender and ethnicity in the conventional Sorbian discourse intersect. In thrall to the ethnic and nationalist projects in which the Sorbs and Sorbian culture unify as a whole inwardly and distinguish themselves from the others outwardly, Sorbian women are symbolized as the biological and cultural reproducers of their ethnic collectivity. In the name of the Sorbian people, Sorbian women's gender difference is reduced to a static understanding in which women are given certain ethnic and national responsibilities; at the same time, ethnicity is condensed into a stagnant aggregate of objective features as exemplified in language, tradition and so on. In this sense, Sorbian women confront double forms of subordination where gender and ethnicity congregate. This twofold subordination serves as a point of departure for this study, while intersections of gender and ethnicity enable us to acquire some purchase over an understanding of Sorbian women's positionings in the complex connections of social relations. In order to further elaborate upon how gender and ethnicity intersect with each other, an overview of the concept of intersectionality would be of help here.

This idea of intersectionality gives a new prominence to the study of how different social formations interconnect along the axes of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and so forth. This concept is employed in a multitude of contexts, predominantly in the field of women's rights and equality law (Bradley 2007: 190). It is especially connected with US American jurisprudent Kimberlé Crenshaw, who states that black women are systematically ignored and voices criticism against American anti-discrimination legislation which favors black men and white women (Walgenbach 2007: 48). In the case of black women, the categories *gender* and *race* in legislation are conceptualized as mutually exclusive (ibid., emphasis Walgenbach's). By drawing on the case studies concerning General Motors' employment policy and other comparable cases, Grenshaw argues that black women are subordinated in terms of racism and sexism (Walgenbach 2007: 48).

In the "Background briefing on intersectionality" from 2001 worked out by the Working Group on Women and Human Rights of the United Nations, the term is defined as follows:

> Intersectionality is an integrated approach that addresses forms of multiple discrimination on the basis of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as they intersect with gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, migrant, socio-economic or other status. Intersectional discrimination is a form of racism and racial discrimination which is not the sum of race PLUS another form of discrimination to be dealt with separately but is a

> distinct and particular experience of discrimination unified in one person or group. (United Nations 2001, quoted in Bradley & Healy 2008: 44)

As seen from the above definition, intersectionality deals with discrimination resulting from both sexism and racism and may lead to multiple forms of subordination, marginalization and disempowerment (Bradley & Healy 2008: 44). Bradley and Geraldine Healy's case studies on black and minority women's work experiences in the UK labor market (2008) are an example of this. In the view of Harriet Bradley, Professor of Sociology at the University of Bristol, England, intersectionality, therefore corresponds to what she calls "multiple positioning" and "multiple disadvantage" (Bradley 2007: 190). Furthermore, as she argues, there are three key points of an intersectional approach: 1) looking at a single aspect of disadvantage may lead to distortions and also mask other forms of oppression; 2) in any given context, different social dynamics will be in operation together; 3) the intersection of differences may produce the most extreme case of exploitation and discrimination (Bradley 2007: 190f.; Bradley & Healy 2008: 45).

The idea of intersectionality is mainly used when exploring interlocking inequalities, oppression and disadvantages that persons or groups experience in their social relations. It involves two or more forms of subordination, as manifested in Bradley's idea of "multiple positioning" in the context of intersectionality as above. Different forms of difference are given their due weight in each case. Different relations between differences also appear in various ways under different conditions. For example, women's identities are constructed in gender processes that vary in a way that is determined by their racial/ethnic background, sexual orientation, disability or religion (see Bradley & Healy 2008: 46). This "multiple positioning" is particularly relevant to my study of Sorbian women for it opens up the possibility of awareness that women's gender identity is intersected by ethnicity and vice versa. To take it a step further, gender intersects or is intersected by other sources of identity or other forms of difference, e.g. class, religion, etc. Seen in this light, Sorbian women, who have been conceptualized as a homogenous group in the Sorbian discourse and in the representation from both the German and Sorbian side, will not be considered as a unitary category any longer, but rather as a heterogeneous group whose members' identities emerge from multiple positionings intersected by gender, ethnicity, class, religion, nationality, age and so forth.

In addition to the idea of intersectionality, the practice approach, which focuses on the actor's interpretation of actions, interactions, experiences and performances, also helps us to find insightful ways of envisioning women's positionings anew. It is of significant importance for us to excavate the lives of the women participating in this study because they are veiled in the name of the Sorbian people and framed under the banner of the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects and these perspectives will help us attain a new perspective on their gendered life experiences. Moreover, approaching cultural practices as constructed by experience in everyday life can be seen as a way out of the impasse in which the conventional definition for the identity of an ethnic group renders the practice of Sorbian identity construction insoluble. Furthermore, the females of a non-dominant ethnic group become easily caught up in the double-layered predicament of an essentialist view about ethnicity and gender. Therefore, it is more

appropriate to compare the positions of minority women with the numerous alternative models through which they construct themselves every day (Nadig 1989: 174).

In my view, it is germane to turn the spotlight on the life experiences of those studied when we speak of practice. The concept "experience" comes from the standpoint of the "anthropology of experience" and "practice approach" (Römhild 1998: 17). Its main point is liberating people from their conceived role as a passive object of culture while rehabilitating them as social and cultural actors: Their everyday actions are seen as actively influencing their living conditions (ibid.). "Experience" represents the following two dimensions: 1) the historical, referring back to the past and conveyed experience, which takes the form of "collective memory" with which past experience is available for current thinking and action (Römhild 1998: 18); and 2) the social, meaning the experience developed by interacting with others. The fact that "experience" helps to transfer the reality of human consciousness and make their interpretation accessible heralds a new view on "experience" as an open-textured notion in opposition to the fixed and static term of "culture" (ibid.). Therefore, in spite of a member's ethnic origin, everyday "experiences" hold the possibility of constructing collective thinking and action (ibid.).

On the one hand, "experience" helps us to abandon any static view of identity and to direct our attention to the dynamic processes through which individuals construct their identities: the processes of identification. On the other hand, we now recognize the place of individual action in social life, i.e. the individual is perceived more as an autonomous social actor than he/she has been in the past – such as in former societies, nature, the kinship system, the state, class, and society, with its capital acting as a metaphysical entity. All these have obstructed our search for the meaning of individual behavior in the past (Melucci 1997: 64). Through everyday experience, everyday life takes place in an arena where social actors communicate and interact with each other, and it is on this intersubjective level that they build their life perspective which is grounded on similar experiences. Their common cultural practices develop accordingly.

Seen from this point of view, shared everyday life experiences connect social actors despite their ancestral origin. That is to say, members have a sense of attachment to one certain culture and ascribe the characteristics of one particular ethnic group to themselves as a consequence of the experiences on which one of their identities are based. This way of mapping the intersection of gender and ethnicity, from the perspective of experiences, not only redefines the concepts of gender and ethnicity, but also accentuates one very important point for this study: The Sorbs, meaning also Sorbian women, are not kept motionless in the confinement of culture and "naturalized" as the bearers of Sorbian culture and ethnicity. This also means, however, that a person with no Sorbian heritage can also identify him/herself as a Sorb, and some case studies in this book are illustrations of this. This identification can occur on the grounds of his or her experiences in everyday life, for instance, through work, language learning, friendship and marriage.

What is more, the idea of "experience" achieves centrality in the sense of identity. Barth studies a Pakistani family that has immigrated to Norway to exemplify these reflections (1994a). Each of the family members – the young man who arrived first, then later his wife from Pakistan, and their children who were born in Norway – has a very different set of experiences than the other because, by responding to his/her new

environment, his/her knowledge and skills increase and his/her values are modified as well. He/she also obtains skills in coping with a complex society consisting of Norwegians and fellow Pakistanis and other ethnic groups. These experiences necessarily reconstruct his/her sense of identity. Briefly speaking, in Barth's version, "his [or her] positioning and his fund of culture – of knowledge, skills and values – are singular to him and a product of his experience, and are influx; and his ethnic identity, as manifested inside and across the boundary, is constantly evolving" (1994a: 14f.). The implication that each family member expresses his/her culture through interaction with others unfolds the idea that key nodes of ethnic recruitment, such as the family unit, also serve as crucibles for cultural difference and contention. Such an assumption states that culture is reproduced as something each of us accumulate as a condensation of our own experience. Culture is therefore rendered as both a flux and continuity of variation because each member of the family is "deeply divided in the culture that each commands, parts of which will share with different circles of others, both inside and outside the ethnic group" (1994a: 15).

Finally, the practice perspective foregrounds everyday experiences and renders the conceptions of gender and ethnicity dynamic. Simultaneously, it reveals gender and ethnicity as constructions in an on-going process because it seems them as relational and interactive. Women's actions, choices and strategies are accordingly made perceptible. Based on this stance, the subjects in this study – the Sorbian women – will be revitalized as acting agents who actively handle their lives in terms of culture, ethnicity and gender as well as many other aspects of their everyday lives.

1.2 Articulating and Changing Identities – Discussions on Identity Construction in the Sorbian Community

1.2.1 "Becoming" "Sorbian" Implicated in the Relation between Ethnicity and Nationalism

As discussed earlier (Chapter 1.1.3), Barth's edited work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) has changed the prevailing approach to ethnic identity, in which the concept of culture constitutes the main concern of the anthropological studies on ethnicity. Before Barth, shared culture, objective cultural traits and origin were regarded as being central to ethnic identity. Anthropologists also took it for granted that culture equaled society. Instead of considering culture as the foundation for the study of ethnicity, Barth saw the concept of boundary as the critical focus of investigation of ethnic groups. Barth dismantled the one-to-one relationship between ethnicity and culture. Other scholars of "situational" (instrumentalist) ethnicity also severed ethnicity from culture and argued that culture is only relevant to ethnicity for political reasons (e.g. A. Cohen 1969). Situationalism is significant for my study of the Sorbs particularly because it provides an analytical impetus with which to challenge the prevailing conceptualization of Sorbian ethnicity ingrained in the equation of ethnicity and culture. Moreover, this approach to ethnicity highlights ethnicity as not inherent in nature, but constructed in social interaction. Ethnic identity is thus not an inborn property of a group, but is rather situational and relational. Most important of all, such a view dissolves culturally defined and determined ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic

group. However, if culture really can be separated from ethnicity, then why do "cultural things" still acquire importance when people talk about their ethnic identity? What is the force that makes a common culture an indispensable constituent of ethnicity? And if ethnicity is only deployed strategically as a means of competition for resources and struggle of interests, then why do people feel "naturally" attached to their peers? The relation between ethnicity and nationalism will be of help in delving into these questions.

Inquiry into the relation between ethnicity and nationalism has rarely been taken up by anthropologists[14] and analysts of ethnicity and nationalism (Verdery 1994: 42). The investigations of ethnic and ethnic community in the past have been done separately from the studies of national identity and nationalism. It was the ethnic revival in the West which began in the 1960s that stimulated a reconsideration of both "ethnicity" and "nationalism" (Smith 1992: 1, quoted in Verdery 1994: 42). Since then, it has become accepted that "ethnicity" and "nationalism" are closely related, both as empirical realities and fields of study (ibid.).

Exploring the relation between ethnicity and nationalism prepares a breeding ground for us to understand how people "become" "Sorbian", why they "have" a "Sorbian" identity and how their conscious "Sorbian" sentiment develops. Before investigating these questions, there is a need to discuss the notion of nationalism by drawing on social science, chiefly on Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson. In his *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), philosopher Ernest Gellner[15] (1925~1995), who was of Jewish-Czech origin and was raised and educated in the UK, identifies nationalism first and foremost as "a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (1983: 1). As he further succinctly points out, "nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state […] should not separate the power-holders from the rest" (ibid.). In Gellner's view on nationalism, the national unit is the ethnic group who dominates the state, where the political entity and cultural one converge into a unity. Gellner understands nationalism as a reaction to industrialization: Within the state, a homogenization and standardization of national culture is necessary for the development of the industrializing modern state so that a certain level of skills and capabilities of the vast numbers of working population will be ensured.

Another significant perspective on nationalism is explored by Benedict Anderson, a Southeast Asian Studies expert who analyzes nationalism by focusing on nation as an "imagined political community" (1983: 15). In his insightful work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, he traces the cultural roots of nationalism relevant to the religious community and the dynastic realm (1983: 17ff.). He particularly analyzes the emergence of nations in the context of the innovations in communications and technology established by print capitalism. Through the printed language, as Anderson argues, an indefinite number of individuals

[14] Nationalism has usually been explored by historians, political scientists and macrosociologists. For anthropologists, it is a relatively new terrain. During the 1980s and 1990s, the study of nationalism has become a topic within anthropology. (Eriksen 2002 [1993]: 97.)

[15] He has multiple roles as philosopher, anthropologist, sociologist, and a self-ascribed Enlightenment rationalist fundamentalist.

are subsumed under a single calendrical date and linked with each other although they never know each other. Moreover, Anderson is concerned about the religious aspect of nationalism in which the nation is seen as a sacred community. Further, kinship tropes (motherland, *Vaterland*, *patria*) articulate a "natural" sense of belonging in the nation as a family. In this sense, the religious and familial aspects of nationalism make the nation members feel as if they do not choose membership to a nation, but rather it is "natural":

> Nation-ness is assimilated to skin-color, gender, parentage, and birth-era – all these things one can not help. And in these 'natural ties', one senses what might call 'the beauty of *gemeinschaft*' […] precisely because such ties are not chosen, they have about them a halo of disinterestedness. (1983: 131, emphasis Anderson's)

More notably, such a "natural tie" to nation, like the attachment to family, exerts a forceful and constant influence over individuals' feeling and sentiment for their nation as an expression of political love – so that they are willing to die for their nation.

There is difference between Gellner and Anderson in their views toward nationalism. The former focuses on the political aspect of nationalism and locates the rise of the nation in the context of industrialization, while the latter devotes a conspicuous amount of attention to the standardization of knowledge and representations facilitated through print capitalism and the emotional power that encourages individuals to feel closely and "naturally" attached to their nations. In spite of their dissimilarity, it is still important to be aware that both of them, along with other scholars of nationalism, e.g. Eric Hobsbawm (1990), identify nations as a modern phenomenon and a result of European historical development (the French Revolution). Nations are not a natural given, but are rather constructions created by nationalist ideologies which aim to culturally homogenize all individuals into nations and states.

As Katherin Verdery, Professor at Johns Hopkins University and specialist in the Eastern European anthropology, points out, the above authors do not overtly bring ethnicity into their analysis of nationalism as cultural homogenization (1994: 43). For Verdery, anthropologist Brackette F. Williams' explicit association of nationalism with ethnicity calls our attention to the study of the interconnection of ethnicity, nationalism, state formation and cultural homogenization. This linkage of ethnicity, culture and the state, in Verdery's view, is supposed to be one of the future focuses of research on ethnicity (1994: 44). Verdery contextualizes her discussion of Williams by referring to Barth's conceptualization of ethnicity as a form of social organization of cultural difference in her "Ethnicity, Nationalism, and State-making. Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: Past and Future" (1994)[16]. Verdery takes up three points that Barth discusses in his *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969): 1) ethnicity as an organizational type; 2) ethnicity as rooted in dichotomization rather than cultural content; and 3) ethnicity as situational. In thinking about these three key insights, Verdery inquires into which theoretical and analytical concerns is still useful in Barth's work and discusses which new directions can be taken for the future study of ethnicity. She proposes a new conceptualization of "new ethnicity" that is "a phenomenon inextricably entwined with

[16] This article was based on the lecture given at the conference on *The Anthropology of Ethnicity* in 1993 and aims to critically review the developments within the field since the publication of Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969).

gender, race, class, capitalism and changing forms of state power" (1994: 55). This addresses the concerns that the study of ethnicity involves different major levels as discussed at the end of Chapter 1.1.3. Among other things, the issue of the relation between individuals and the state has a bearing on my discussion on the Sorbs here. More concretely, looking at ethnic minorities in relation to the establishment of nation states will call our attention to the historical genesis of the notion of ethnicity and identity.

Let me now return to Williams. For Williams, a sufficient theory of ethnicity should be able to explain the historical and contemporary ideological linkages among ethnicity and other categorical aspects of identity formation processes in the nation-state (1989: 429). In a word, state-formation, in William's view, is the most significant context within which ethnicity is produced (Verdery 1994: 45). In the process of nation-building (and state-making), a variety of plans and programs for constructing myths of homogeneity out of the realities of heterogeneity serve to create purity out of impurity (Williams 1989: 429). The construction of purity aims to demarcate groups on the basis of categorical identities. Purity involves a classificatory moment of purification and the range of issues motivating its invention (ibid.). In the process of purification, state-makers declare and assert themselves a pure people by classifying and creating those who fail to have something in common with the "mainstream" as "peripheral" (Williams 1989: 439). In this sense, "commonality" is made normative. Ethnicity as "difference" is then rendered visible and abnormal in the nation state's homogenizing projects. As Williams concludes,

> Ethnicity labels the visibility of that aspect of the identity formation process that is produced by and subordinated to nationalist programs and plans – plans intent on creating putative homogeneity out of heterogeneity through the appropriative processes of a transformist hegemony (1989: 439)

In thinking about the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism, Ana María Alonso, who teaches at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Arizona, shares the same view as Williams and considers the concept of hegemony to be a useful approach for analyzing how nationalism and state practices simultaneously homogenize community while creating heterogeneity (1994: 393). Alonso sees the state strategies of spatialization, substantialization, aestheticization, commodification and temporalization as the key for the construction of transformist forms of hegemony, while concentrating on how anthropologists have reproduced the above dominant strategies in their study (1994: 393-398): 1) Spatialization explores the relationship between spatial practices, nationalism and ethnicity. As Alonso points out, anthropological research on the role of space and place in the creation of social boundaries is scant. She thus suggests that anthropologists have to scrutinize how the organization and representation of space is implicated in ethnic formation and inequality, in state strategies of asymmetric incorporation and appropriation, in the complex dialectic between hierarchy and egalitarianism, heterogeneity and homogeneity, and in the imagining of nations (1994: 393f.). 2) Substantialization refers to the tropes of kinship and descent used to substantialize the nation and makes the categorical identities of ethnicity a solid and coherent substance. This significantly applies to low-status groups in which "cultural

issues" are represented as static, homogenous tradition because, by analogy with folk notions of biological reproduction, the transmission of their cultural heritage is seen as an endless, inert process of mimesis. In this way, subordinated ethnic groups' agency or creativity are denied. Therefore, the cultural heritage of the low-status groups becomes aestheticized and commodified by the state. For example, the Mexican state has glorified elements of Indian culture selectively, while at the same time enabling the incorporation of Indians into the nation but maintaining their lower-status identity and class position. However, paradoxically, it is this ethnicized form of commodity fetishism that produces an image of Indian authenticity as eternal mimesis (1994: 397, Alonso refers to J. Friedlander 1975). 3) The state employs the strategy of temporalization to particularize ethnic identities and distinguish their contributions and places in the nation. By taking Ecuadorian nationalism as an example (referring to M. Crain 1990), Alonso explicates that the state fossilizes the subordinated indigenous groups in the past and reduces their contributions to the nation to folklore while obliterating contemporary realities of exploitation and domination (1994: 398).

By employing these nationalist strategies as described above, the state-makers not only totalize and homogenize culture, group and territory into "oneness", but at the same time they also establish and fix what should be "excluded". In this process, the state also makes people "become" national. That is to say, a durable sense of belongingness to the nation/state is forged. Simultaneously, as noted earlier, nationalist ideologies and practices of state-formation also generate the visibility of groups of "different" cultures, and "ethnic identities" of those rendered visible-as-different are therefore produced (see Verdery 1994: 47). The concept of "identity", as Verdery puts it, is "an element in a set of processes (including ideological ones) through which a particular western form – the nation-state – has become generalized across the globe, albeit with modifications for the different contexts it encounters" (ibid.). Against this background, it is clear that ethnicity and identity are the products of a specific historical process contexualized in the formation of nation state, particularly in Western Europe. This is an important background for us to keep in mind when exploring why and how the research subjects in this study "become" "Sorbian" in the historical context.

Throughout all the vicissitudes of Sorbian history, German repression and assimilation not only rendered the Sorbs into a visible difference, but also acted as the key impetus for the Sorbs to make themselves "become" "Sorbian". In the struggle against Germanization, particularly during the period of Sorbian "national rebirth" in the mid-19th century, Sorbian ethnic leaders developed a variety of strategies designed to stir up Sorbian awareness and enhance their sense of attachment to the Sorbian culture. These nationalist strategies included researching the Sorbian languages, establishing societies, and developing Sorbian literature, music, theater plays, and so on. In this process, Sorbian intellectuals "inwardly" created the Sorbian people as a "unified whole" while at the same time also constructing an outwardly homogeneous collectivity by means of oppressing internal difference or diverse groupings and "essentializing" their self-image and communal identities so that they could distinguish themselves from the dominant Germans. A clear-cut boundary was therefore drawn between the internal sameness within the Sorbian community and external difference from the Germans.

Seen from the point of view of the Sorbian nationalist strategies above, it is evident

that Sorbian ethnicity is a product of German nationalist ideologies (although Germany is a late nation state). Furthermore, German national identities crafted the frame that produced Sorbian identities. However, notably, the strategies employed by the Sorbian ethnic elites to build themselves up as a "Sorbian" whole is actually based on constructing homogeneity out of the realities of heterogeneity. This is exactly the same as in nationalism. Seen from this point of view, it is meaningful to figure out the similarities between nationalism and ethnicity. Following Verdery, ethnicity and nationalism bear similarities with each other in the following aspects: 1) both of them are names for closely related forms of social ideology; 2) they are means of social classification on the assumption that certain types of difference are significant; 3) under both ideologies, human beings are presupposed to naturally come in "kinds", and they organize these "kinds" specially in terms of ideas about common culture and shared origin, based in quasi-kinship metaphors; 4) both stress the internal homogeneity of a given people and its differentiation from peoples of other kinds; 5) both have effects on consciousness and tend to produce in their bearers a felt sense of difference in interaction with other "kinds" of people, although the extent and character of these effects vary from one case to another; and 6) the state is crucial to the organization of both (1994: 49). Although ethnicity and nationalism have something in common, they are not exactly the same. In Verdery's view, they are different either in the kind of political/ideological work they accomplish or in their historical trajectories. Nationalism sorts the world into "kinds of people" who relate to an actual or potential political entity known as a state (1994: 50). In a word, nationalism, as a political ideology based simultaneously on an inner putative homogeneity and on differentiation from others, marks a relation between states and their assumed similar members. Moreover, the construct "nation" has a long historical trajectory that can be traced back to medieval times, when the idea of "community of birth"[17] achieved its centrality (ibid.). Ethnicity, by contrast, does not have a historically presupposed connection to the idea of "community of birth" defined at the level of the state (ibid.). The referent for ethnicity's kinship idiom is of a lower order – initially, the "tribes" to be managed during the process of state consolidation (ibid.).

1.2.2 Identification in Relation to the Other

As analyzed in the preceding section, it is very important to be aware that "identity" is the product of the formation of nation-state in 19th century Europe (especially Western Europe). The nationalist ideologies homogenize people as members of the same culture and shared origin by constructing, symbolizing and representing legends, history, religion, folklore, language and tradition as "their" culture, with which each group member can identify while also offering them a clear-cut boundary from groups in "other" cultures. Under the projects of homogenizing culture, group members, despite of their differences of gender or social standing, are cohered into a unity. Under this circumstance, *one* stable identity is forged and each person has only *one* identity of a certain basic kind (ethnic, national, gender) (See Verdery 1994: 37).

[17] The exception to this is the example of the 18th century England and France, both of which saw the collective shared sovereignty as the nexus of their nations (Hobsbawm 1990: 18-20, see also Verdery 1994:50).

Such a model of constant and autonomous Sorbian identity is the one developed by Sorbian folklorist Paul Nedo (1908~1984) who was an important figure in the Sorbian movement in the 20th century and was also a highly-reputed scholar of folklore in former East Germany. He was born as the only child of a Sorbian couple who raised him in German. He was the chairperson of the *Domowina* from 1934 to 1937 and from 1945 to 1950. Nedo was also a professor at University of Leipzig where he contributed greatly to the establishment of the *Sorabistik* department, and he taught at Humboldt University in Berlin. From 1953 to 1968, he chaired the ethnography section of the *Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR* (the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic). Nedo builds on an essentialist concept of identity and origin based on family, mother tongue, village community, customs, tradition, people, history and culture. All of these are formed in concentric circles (Ratajczak 2004: 40f.). In her dissertation *Mühlroser Generationen. Deutsch-sorbische Überlebensstrategien in einem Lausitzer Tagebaugebiet* (The Mühlrose Generations. German-Sorbian Survival Strategies in a Lusatian Opencast Mining District) (2004), which focuses on how four generations of the village inhabitants in Mühlrose/Miłroaz on the Lusatian Heath develop their respective survival strategies to cope with the impact of opencast mining, German ethnologist Cordula Ratajczak criticizes that this classic discourse on Sorbian identity, denoting a more or less pre-modern farming and rural Sorbian "island",[18] contrasts sharply with their real "life world" that has long since been influenced by industrialization (Ratajczak 2004: 40). The various composites that seem so "natural" in the model of the autonomous Sorbian identity developed by Nedo create a cultural homogeneity to stabilize, fix, and guarantee an unchanging oneness.

The ultimate power wielded by a people and a culture over social life impels them to homogenize themselves. However, one could also argue the opposite: The power "freezes" the Sorbs into an image in people's minds. And exactly by means of this strategy of self-essentializing and self-homogenization, an "imagined Sorbian community" is conjured up. In my view, the printed Sorbian language has been the most exclusive, vital component in evoking and awaking people's ties to Sorbian collectivity because applying the Sorbian language, which is also "naturalized" as the mother tongue of the Sorbs in the Sorbian nationalist projects, symbolizes resistance to German assimilation. Furthermore, thanks to a variety of works written in and also about the Sorbian language and the publication and circulation of Sorbian newspapers, the magical moment arrived when nation and culture turned chance into destiny.[19] Benedict Anderson's approach to nationalism helps us to explore why the Sorbian language makes people feel that their membership in the Sorbian community is natural. Through the assortment of undertakings and maneuvers in the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects, ordinary people feel a sense of "being of the same people" as others whom they have never known during their lifetimes because they believe that they have the same ancestral origin and share common cultural traits. In this process of connecting with each other, people simultaneously "become" "Sorbian", and an "imagined" Sorbian community is thus evoked.

As can be seen when the Sorbian community as a "whole" is created in Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects to have a unified origin, history, language and tradition,

[18] According to statistics, two thirds of Sorbs were wage-earners as early as 1884 (Ratajczak 2004: 40).
[19] This is a paraphrase of Anderson's "the magic of nationalism turns chance into destiny" (1983: 19).

this unitary view emphasizes boundedness, continuity and homogeneity and sets the tone for constructing Sorbian identity. In such a process, "Sorbian-ness" becomes an entirely essential constitutive quality for every individual within the Sorbian group, and in turn, each single person becomes fixed in this fundamental, indispensable value that connotes "Sorbian-ness". Moreover, in this sense, the Sorbs live as if they are a separate group of people, demarcated from others and unrelated to external contexts in a timeless continuity.

However, Ratajczak's disapproval of Nedo's model of an autonomous Sorbian identity explicates that identity is never self-sufficient, but is rather constructed through ambivalence. As Ratajczak argues, Nedo's own personal identification process is marked by an instable brittleness – his parents raised him speaking German and he grew up in a milieu where Sorbs were almost completely assimilated by Germans (2004: 41f.). Hence Nedo's own identity, according to Ratajczak, was neither formed within a unified and well-rounded Sorbian world, nor was it fashioned in an all-inclusive sameness, an identical and naturally constituted unity with no internal differentiation. Moreover, this pattern of autonomous Sorbian identity, broached during the period of National Socialism when Nedo was in charge of the Domowina from 1933 to 1937, leaves the everyday reality of the Sorbs unnoticed. Instead, it reflects the imagination of German National Socialism. As a key representative of the Sorbs (through the Domowina), Nedo communicates in the language of the significant Other, the German *Blut – Boden – Volkstum* (blood – soil – national character) which to him are the braces of identity construction (*Identität stiftende Klammer*) (2004: 41, here referring to Bresan 2002: 65). For Sorbian historian Annett Bresan, whose doctoral thesis focuses on Nedo's biography, it is tragic that Nedo did not recognize the incompatibility of the ideology of the totalitarian Nazi state with the objectives of the Sorbian movement. She sees this failed project (the Domowina and its associated societies were banned in 1937) as an attempted balancing act in which Sorbian independence relied on the acceptance of the majority culture because Nedo relied on the chauvinistic Nazi *Weltanschaung* as a basis (Bresan 2002: 70, see also Ratajczak 2004: 41). As Ratajczak further analyzes, the general discourse at that time influenced Nedo's model of an autonomous Sorbian identity which is particularly a modern construction of tradition and national characteristics from a modern "postassimilated" situation: Nedo's construction of an autonomous Sorbian identity can be seen as an endeavor to invent authenticity and tradition; this can be understood as a strategy of compensation with which Nedo reconciled his personal loss (2004: 42). Nedo walked on a tightrope between being German and Sorb – his life stands for a kind of survival strategy for belonging to a culture of an ethnic minority in which actors, on the one hand, endeavor to differentiate themselves from the majority culture and unite themselves, while also struggling toward making their culture recognized as part of the majority culture (Bresan 2002: 11). Ratajczak symbolizes this ambivalent identification process as a river (2004: 43). The use of the metaphor of a river here thoroughly outlines the idea that identity construction is free from thinking in terms of naturalness and biological inevitability. Instead, it is variable, never fixed, fluid, continually constructed and reconstructed. Moreover, the form of the river symbolizes an exchange of different meanings in which German and Sorbian confront and reach out to each other in various contexts over time (ibid.).

Taking Ratajczak's examination of Nedo's identification process as a case-in-point, we become aware that identity is not a static essence, but is rather an identification process which is on-going. This shows a change in the notion of identity. As the Jamaican-British Cultural Studies academic Stuart Hall argues in his "The Question of Cultural Identity" (1992a), subjects who were in the past as having a homogeneous and stable identity are becoming fragmented in late-modernity. Modern identities are decentered. As analyzed in five conceptual shifts in social theory and the human sciences – Marxism, psychoanalysis, linguistics, Foucault and feminism – the conception of the subject turns into a decentering one with open, contradictory, unfinished, fragmented identities (1992a: 285ff.). Such identities are the features of the post-modern subject. Psychoanalytical conceptions of identity are of particular significance here, for example, because they illustrate the construction of the self in the gaze of the Other. Hall refers to psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's reading of Sigmund Freud's theories and brings to light that the identity of small children does not come from the inside, from their core of being, but is rather developed through their relation to the Other (Hall 1992a: 286f.). In this process, children build relations with symbolic systems outside themselves and enter into the various systems of symbolic representation (language, culture and sexual difference) (Hall 1992a: 287). However, the paradoxical and uncertain feelings accompanying this difficult entry (e.g. the splitting love and hate of the father) are the central features of "unconscious formation of the subject" and leave the subject "divided". They remain with each subject for life (ibid.). Therefore, as Hall puts it, "identity arises, not so much from the fullness of identity which is already inside us as individuals, but from a *lack* of wholeness which is 'filled' from *outside us*, by the ways we imagine ourselves to be seen by *others*" (ibid., emphasis Hall's). More significantly, by relating to the Other, identity is always thought of as a process.

The Self and the Other are inseparably entwined with each other, as demonstrated in Ratajczak's analysis on Nedo's process of identity construction: German and Sorbian always relate with each other. As seen in the case of the Sorbs, the Other usually refers to the Germans as a historical, political and cultural consequence in the well-established discourse on assimilation and conquest by the Germans. However, based on the life experiences of the women under study in this book, the Other is never fixed as a certain counterpart, but instead varies all the time, depending on which context those under study are located in. The Other is not necessarily the German people, but could also be their Sorbian peers as can be seen in the case study of a young girl who was confronted with being excluded by the Sorbs of Bautzen when she changed schools there from her home village. The same applies to German-speaking Sorbian women who construct their identities in the gaze of the Other, of Sorbian-speaking Sorbs. Similarly, for some women who do not have Sorbian ancestry but who identify themselves with the Sorbs, their identification process is constructed through their relations to native Sorbian-speakers. As revealed in the case studies which will be explored in the following chapters, it is, however, important to be aware that the apparent binarism of Sorbian and German actually dissolves into a relation between the two that is continually changing and fluid. The neat dichotomies – inside/outside, included/excluded, speaker/silenced – are therefore subverted (see Hall 2000 [1997]: 48).

1.2.3 The Intertwined Relation between Identity and Difference

As seen in Ratajczak's analysis of Nedo's autonomous model of Sorbian identity in comparison with the ambivalent identification process in Nedo's actual day-to-day life balancing between Sorbian and German cultures and based on the empirical examples gathered during my fieldwork, identity is not seen here as a demarcation and exclusion of difference, but is rather constructed through difference, which is constantly moving and changing according to context. Identity and difference stand in an interweaving and blending relation to each other as identity becomes contested, disputed, denied and related to something what it is not – difference. This thus manifests identity as a positioning which is not the opposite of difference, but rather depends on difference (see Woodward 1997: 29).

The idea that identity and difference form a dialectical process in identity construction is borrowed from postcolonial theory. From the postcolonial perspective, identity is inextricably articulated within difference, which is expressed in the "doubleness of discourse, this necessity of the Other to the self, the inscription of identity in the look of the other" (Hall 2000 [1997]: 48). Simultaneously, identity is constructed in the process in which the Self and the Other confront and reach out to each other in various contexts over time. Meanings produced in the dialectic of identity and difference are thus constantly changing according to every single context. This emphasizes that identity construction is a never-ending, on-going, continually shifting, and always unfinished process. The postcolonial standpoint on identity and difference draws on the poststructuralist theories of French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Derrida rejects the Western systems of knowledge which claim universal truth by accentuating the originating moment of immanence. Therefore, a system of binary processing and division that occupies the main terrain not only discards cultural diversity but also hides the power structures which preserve the hierarchical relations of difference (Rutherford 1990: 21). Derrida questions the structure of binarism proposed by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction between signifier and signified in linguistics and French social anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss' difference between nature and culture in structuralism because such terms operating the binary opposition are an exercise asymmetrical power relations: One element is invested with truth and achieves its status by excluding and marginalizing what it is not (see ibid.). For Derrida, meanings are therefore not rigidly fastened in a neat dichotomy, but they differ and defer constantly. Moreover, Derrida affirms the liberation from a point of fixity and abandons "all reference to a center, to a subject, to a privileged reference, to an origin" (Derrida 1978: 286). Meaning must be defined all the time, as it keeps on sliding and changing.

As a critical stimulus for reading the historical, political, cultural and discursive aspects of continuous colonialism, the postcolonial perspective ensues as an analytical category representing the ever-marginalized voices of the colonized in the countries formerly colonized by western imperial powers, rereading the ever-excluded difference as a consequence of binary operation (see Ashcroft et al.1995). Postcolonial experts aim to illuminate the difference and diversity inscribed on the experiences of people once-colonized, immigrants and of dark skin color by redefining colonial practices, texts and institutions in terms of deconstruction (Ha 2000: 391). The central argument of

postcolonialism takes the Other as the starting-point and gives fresh relevance to the definition of difference (see ibid.). The images of the colonized, the marginalized, the subaltern and the silenced that were seemingly fixed in linear historical narratives and cohered in monolithic subordination are transformed into ambivalent, contradictory subjects (Bhabha 1994). This involves a revolt of the margin against the center, in which "all experience could be viewed as uncentered, pluralistic, and multifarious" (Achcroft et al. 1989: 12). In this sense, "marginality thus became an unprecedented source of creative energy" (ibid.).

Against the background of postcolonial theory, it can be unquestionably asserted that postcolonial perspectives on identity and difference are helpful for understanding the process of the identity construction of a European autochthonous minority such as the Sorbs in Germany. It is worth noting here that postcolonial theory has gradually achieved its centrality in some recent studies on the Sorbs. Tschernokoshewa, among others, blazes the trail for applying the notions of ambivalence, hybridity, and difference as keywords in her various analyses of the Sorbs. Her *Das Reine und das Vermischte. Die deutschsprachige Presse über Andere und Anderssein am Beispiel der Sorben* (The Pure and the Hybrid. The German Press on Others and Otherness with Reference to the Sorbs) from 2000 is a prime example; Ratajczak's also brilliantly analyzes ambivalent processes of identification and dealing with difference in her dissertation on the villagers of Mühlrose (2004) which I alluded to earlier. By drawing inspiration from Tschernokoshewa and Ratajczack, I think postcolonial theory is conducive to understanding the Sorbs. Some points here that require clarification are as follows: First, the Sorbs, who have been objectified as a subjugated people in German-dominant representation and knowledge, are rehabilitated as subjects; moreover, the meaning of difference as the Otherness inscribed on the Sorbs' minority status is transformed into an enhancement of marginality. Second, the internal difference within the Sorbian community, which is otherwise constructed as a unified collectivity in order to mark a clear-cut boundary from the dominant German people, is rendered visible and is recognized. Third, the concepts of culture, ethnicity and identity undergo reevaluation from the postcolonial view because difference entails a reconsideration of the established standpoints in which the above noted notions are commonly viewed as "natural" entities and postulated based on essentialist and homogenous assumptions.

Identity is neither an innate attribute, nor a static location, but rather "a construction, a process never completes – always in process" (Hall 1996: 2), which "can no longer be localized within one cultural unity, but rather takes place as process between cultures" (Ratajczak 2004: 37). More significantly, identity is constructed through difference. Therefore, a stable, linear and autonomous view on Sorbian identity is at stake because it is no longer valid to always see the Sorbs in opposition to the Germans in the assimilation discourse on which the Sorbian identity has been based. Instead, as illustrated in Nedo's actual life world noted earlier and my case studies which I will discuss in the following, identity is constructed in relation to the Other and is also an on-going process.

1.2.4 Identity as a Positioning Constructed through Sets of Differences

The discussion so far marks a shift in our understanding of identity: from a stable,

homogenized und unified national/ethnic identity in the frame of the nationalist/ethnic ideology toward a conceptualization of a never-ending, always incomplete, unfinished identification in late-modernity. Under the overarching rubric imposed by nationalist/ethnic ideology, national/ethnic identity is constructed as an "inherent" sense of belonging that structures people's feelings – a self-sacrificing love for their nation or ethnic community as the extraordinary force of nationalism (see Alonso 1994: 386). In this sense, it is "natural" that individuals have *one* and *the same* preexisting identity. However, notably, as mentioned earlier (Chapter 1.2.1), the nationalist projects of homogenizing culture actually create the myth of culture homogeneity out of the realties of heterogeneity. This culture homogeneity is rather a result of the cultural power that state-makers or ethnic elites exert over differences of ethnicity, class, race, gender and sexuality in order to suppress them. Therefore national cultures and national identities have never been really unified as represented in cultural homogenous images. Instead, they are in fact diverse, heterogeneous and hybrid.

In late-modernity, the conceptualization of identity has changed. Identity is no longer considered to be intact, essential and permanent, but rather shifting and fragmented (Hall 1992a: 276f.). Such a change also portrays the distinction between "traditional" and "modern" societies (1992a: 277). Continuity is the key feature of tradition, while, by contrast, discontinuity characterizes modernity. This particularly involves transformations of time and space, which is implicated in the process of globalization. Globalization is the very force that disrupts the established social order enforced by nationalist ideology. Globalization, which is characteristic of new temporal and spatial arrangements, such as time-space compression, cutting across national boundaries and increased interconnection between communities and mobility, erodes the conceptualization of states and societies as tightly-bounded entities. Under these circumstances, national culture becomes no longer the only source of meaning around which modern identities are formed. Individuals can have different identities at different times; moreover, these identities are contradictory and are drawn in diverse directions, meaning our identifications are always being shifted around (ibid.). In this sense, identity is transformed from an essential coherence into an identification and a positioning that varies within different contexts (ibid.).

In my view, the main concern in the discussion on the concept of identity lies in how difference is located in different contexts. In the frame of national culture, the projects of culture homogeneity not only subsume differences of gender, ethnicity, class, race etc. into a unity, but they also make these deviancies from this putative "normality" and "commonality" visible. Difference is fixed and naturalized into an irreducible essence in the nationalist process. However, due to rapid, extensive and incessant change, in late modernity, societies are continuously being decentered and are thus no longer totalities (see Hall 1992a: 278). Processes of inner diversification within societies are in progress. At the same time, late modern societies are cut through by different social divisions and social antagonisms generating multiple identities for individuals (Hall 1992a: 279, referring to Ernesto Laclau 1990). In late modern societies, individuals are implicated in different subsystems simultaneously (occupation, family, politics, gender, religion, class, and so forth) (Tschernokoshewa 2000: 120). In this sense, difference is reevaluated as the key feature in late modernity. In postcolonial discourses, as noted in the last section, difference is no longer perceived through an "Otherness" practiced in a

binary opposition in the way it was seen as functioning in the logic of nationalist projects. It no longer indicates inequality, subordination, exclusion and inferiority, but undergoes a transformation into the recognition, articulation, and enhancement of marginality (see Ha 1999: 107f.). More notably, difference is central to our understanding of identity construction because identity means living through difference:

> [It is] recognizing that all of us are composed of multiple social identities, not of one. That we are all complexly constructed through different categories, of different antagonisms, and these may have the effect of locating us socially in multiple positions of marginality and subordination, but which do not yet operate on us in exactly the same way. (Hall 2000 [1997]: 57)

In this sense, difference is not only an alternative to binarism and static location, but it is also an insightful concept for tackling the intersection of gender and ethnicity by studying the identity construction of women being researched in this book.

In terms of gender, difference challenges the view of gendered binary oppositions: women/men; nature/culture; private/public. In other words, women are equated with nature and the private sphere of the home, reproduction and child nourishment and nurturance, while men are associated with culture and the public field of social life (see Ortner 1974; Rosaldo 1974). These gendered, dichotomous categorizations render the category "woman" homogenous and underline women's subordination as a universal product of male-dominance. Gender difference is not only revealed as fixed but also as positioned in hierarchy. In voicing her criticism to these gendered binary oppositions, British anthropologist Henrietta L. Moore, currently Professor of Social Anthropology at London School of Economics and Political Science, unlocks the possibility of investigating the connotation of difference. As she suggests, "[…] forms of difference in human social life – gender, class, race, culture, history, etc. – are always experienced, constructed, mediated in interrelation with other" (Moore 1988: 196). Thinking gender difference in relation to other forms of difference entails that gender difference is not conceived in monolithic and constant terms, but rather cultural and social variable terms, i.e. there are not single, homogenous, universal categories of "woman" and gender relations (see Moore 1994: 9). Moreover, this intersection of various forms of difference vitalizes the gender difference articulated and varied in specific contexts. In this process, each form of difference may become weighted in a different way. For instance, in one scene of interaction, gender, ethnic, religious, class elements may respectively provide the major difference, depending on the context (Hauser-Schäublin & Röttger-Rössler 1998: 16). Other forms of difference – ethnic, religious, class etc. – may also make gender difference visible in another spot of interaction (ibid.). These various forms of difference may merge with each other, or they may contradict with each other, depending on different social situations.

Taking difference as a point of departure, identity is revealed as dynamic, multiple formations of sets of difference. One person therefore has various identities which he or she achieves in the course of his or her lifetime, and all of these identities merge at the same time. The individual identifies him/herself according to different social contexts, i.e. these identities are situational and change in his/her life. In this sense, gender identity, for example, is far from being rigid and permanent. Furthermore, one's gender

identity should be seen as relational to one's other identities as noted above. It is always fashioned anew in response to diverse kinds of social contextualization. In modern society, each individual can make choices to mould their lives. The idea that there is an overlapping of a variety of differences which could be gender-, ethnic-, religious-, class- or culturally-related echoes the notion of the "configurative action" proposed by Ilse Lenz, a German scholar of gender studies: Subjects choose some elements of their gender roles, of their ethnic background, etc., and combine them, or play them down or avoid them, depending on how they assess their chances of action (Lenz 1994: 62). The idea of "configurative action" is taken as a point of departure to get out of this cul-de-sac blocked by a substantial stance on gender and ethnicity. An individual cannot be easily fixed according to these categories; instead, this breaking down occurs between different references of action, for example between the role of women and their ethnic ascription. Furthermore, for the acting subject, social influences cause the breaks and changes in their life stories to occur. Configurative action balances the relation between gender, ethnicity and class, meaning the gender role of the agent is not necessarily identical to his/her ethnic identity. Instead, the breaks and changes in subjects' lives arise from the "surplus" of social influences. It can therefore be assumed that a Sorbian woman does not need to act within the framework of Sorbian culture. Her gender role must not correspond with her ethnic ascription. Her identity is never confined within one culture; instead, it is always on the move between various cultures. Besides being an actor (or agent) with intentions and social skills, she is able to fashion her "own life" (Beck et al. 1995), which is absolutely not a continuum, but an identity that is thrown together.

In conclusion, it is important to utilize the variable interrelations between various forms of difference as an analytical window for studying the identification process of the Sorbs. In the words of Sylvia Pritsch, a German academic of literary studies and cultural scholarship with a focus on gender studies:

> [they are] the possibility of thinking and portraying the layering of a variety of differences – be they of a gendered, ethnic, (sub)cultural, language, social, or geopolitical nature. […] As opposed to stable identities of cultures and subjects, this is about opening the scope of culture – a third space – to allow movement across cultures, genders, and identities.[20] (2001: 171)

According to Pritsch and her point of view, the intersections of difference allow me to review the concept of Sorbian identity. The group in question – the Sorbs, including Sorbian women – will therefore undergo reevaluation. It is also in this context that notions of gender, ethnicity and culture in the case of the Sorbs will go through a process of reexamination and redefining. All of these follow from the same premise: identity as a positioning which is never absolutized or homogenized as a transcendental essence, but is rather mediated through and across difference.

[20] Cf. […] die Möglichkeit, die Überlagerung einer Vielzahl von Differenzen – seien sie geschlechtlicher, ethnischer, (sub)kultureller, sprachlicher, sozialer oder geopolitischer Art – zu denken und abzubilden. [...] Gegen stabile Identitäten von Kultur und Subjekten geht es hier um die Eröffnung kultureller Spielräume – Dritter Raum – die Bewegung quer zu Kulturen, Geschlechtern, Identitäten ermöglichen.

1.3 Objectives of This Study

As an ethnic minority in Germany, the Sorbs are defined as an Other. An example of this is how they are portrayed in the German-speaking press. There, the Sorbs, who are typically represented by Sorbian women dressed in Sorbian festive costumes, are produced as a group of people, as a culturally bound unit living timelessly. In the same vein, the pictures in informational books and in the Sorbian-speaking press, in which we see women dressed in the traditional Sorbian way, are also employed by the Sorbs themselves as an apparent marker to demonstrate their Sorbian-ness. This is an expression of the Sorbs' self-assertion and collective existence as a people or *Volk* that distinguishes them from the dominant Other in the historical context, the German people. How the Sorbian people are nowadays portrayed in, for example, German and Sorbian media exhibits a tendency to isolate difference; in other words, the Sorbs are frozen into a coherent, discrete and isolated group. What is more, women are "naturalized" as representatives of the Sorbian people and culture, with the consequence that their actual lives become overshadowed by folklorism. The main point of this analysis is therefore to investigate how the Sorbian women interviewed, as acting agents, live their day-to-day lives. In this process, I will focus on how they construct their identities in their everyday life practices and how they oscillate between different cultures and identities intentionally and consciously, living with and through sets of difference. The women interviewed in this study are seen as social constructions whose sense of belonging to the Sorbian people and culture is generated through social interaction, communication and shared experiences in everyday life. Despite their common experiences, they are also different from one another. Moreover, the group in question is far from being regarded as one of which is always fixed within the explicitly marked-out boundaries of membership in an "ethnic minority", but rather they have different identifications which vary according to life contexts – be they social, cultural, political, economic, ethnic, religious, familial or occupational. They are located in the interaction with and through whom they interact with. Taking it a step further, the Other which the Sorbian people confront is not necessarily the German people, but perhaps rather the Others within the Sorbs themselves, whose difference is defined by binarism and judged according to certain essentialist criteria. An example of this would be Sorbian women who are of Sorbian origin but are unable to speak Sorbian. However, the opposition between the Sorbs and the Germans is well-established in Sorbian historiography and conventional cultural discourses. Therefore it is necessary to emphasize that the employment of the collective terms "the Sorbs"/"the Sorbian people" and "the Germans"/"the German people" in this study is historically contextualized and related to conventional Sorbian discourses which endeavor to draw a clear-cut boundary between an "in group" and "out group". Notably, these collective terms actually involve heterogeneity, as illustrated in the life experiences and everyday practices of those researched which will follow in next chapters.

Before I discuss how the women interviewed approach their sense of self and how they take up their positions in everyday life practices, it is important to look into the Sorbian discourse that it has pervaded the construction of ethnic identity in the Sorbian community. In the long-standing cultural discourse maintained by Sorbian elites who have been engaged in nation-building and identity work, women are bearers of the

Sorbian culture and ethnic and cultural symbols for the Sorbian collective. In this regard, the very first question of tracing the genesis of Sorbian cultural discourse deserves a special note: The point at hand should be why and how the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) of the Sorbs is formed.

Chapter 2, which concentrates on "THE EMERGENCE OF AN IMAGINED SORBIAN COMMUNITY", serves as a basis for us to track down several issues regarding how a people are narrated in the Sorbian discourse: First of all, in this chapter I address the question of how the narrative of Sorbian-ness is constructed in histories. In other words, I look at how the Sorbian people are seen as connected to national history and how they are made to feel bound to the collective destiny of the Sorbian people. In this regard, the following points lend significance to this project: First, we must look at the particular perspective of the Sorbian intelligentsia and elites who were active in nationalist and ethnic projects and how they locate Sorbian history; second, we need to investigate how Sorbian history is told and retold in a way that lets people "naturally" connect themselves and their lives to this history; third, the particular elements constituting the core terms in this process must be identified.

In addition to history, language is always emphasized as the nucleus of identification in the discourse of Sorbian-ness. Therefore, the issue of how language becomes fundamental for collective consciousness and develops as a core of the imagined community will be explored in the second part of this chapter. This involves an important process in which the standardization of the Sorbian language helps to construct the Sorbs as *one* people. It is therefore necessary at this point to ask how language affects ordinary people and how people's consciousness is raised to see the language they use in everyday life as the "Sorbian" language; in other words, the point at issue is why people perceive the "Sorbian" language as their "mother tongue". The effects of evoking people's Sorbian consciousness in the Sorbian community through the Sorbian language continues up to the present day. In this regard, the center of focus should be on those strategies which are employed in terms of the Sorbian language in the Sorbian discourse today.

Along with history and language, tradition also plays a role in giving people the feeling that they belong to the Sorbian community. In other words, tradition is employed as a strategy to narrate Sorbian-ness and is also deployed as an indispensable component of Sorbian identity construction in the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic process. For this reason, first of all, we need to know what is commonly seen as traditional by the Sorbs. The next question concerns how practices and artifacts become marked as Sorbian tradition. An example of this is the process in which Sorbian dress, originally farmer's dress, became "Sorbian" and inextricably intertwined with religious rituals and Sorbian ethnicity. In tackling these issues, however, it is important to be aware of how the notion of tradition is understood, especially with regard to how tradition is invented and becomes slanted toward nationalism in the process of nation-building. Moreover, when discussing tradition, it is necessary to determine the relationship in which relation stands to modernity. This is not only conducive for tracing the meaning of tradition in modernity, but also for interpreting the use of "tradition" to satisfy a present need, for example regarding the Sorbian villagers' current political utilization of traditional costumes for demonstration.

It should be emphasized that, in the process of shaping an imagined Sorbian

community, nationalist and ethnic projects become gendered – women are assigned to a certain kind of role that articulates a kind boundary-setting for their ethnic group while maintaining the boundary between themselves and others. In ethnic and nationalist schemes, "guardians" are considered to be the custodians who defend and protect their culture, tradition and language and are seen as transmitters who hand down cultural characteristics to younger generations. It is usually women that are seen as the primary "guardians" of their ethnic group or nation. In the case of the Sorbs, the term "*serbska maćˊ*" (Sorbian mother), which was coined by the ethnic elites during the Sorbian "national rebirth" in the nineteenth century, integrates women into nationalist projects and symbolizes them as the cultural reproducers of Sorbian collectivity. Therefore, how minority women become linked in the nationalist framework of gender and ethnicity needs to be addressed, particularly regarding the national responsibility accorded to women to foster and transfer the Sorbian language and tradition to younger generations. This question will be taken up later in the sections on the Sorbian language and tradition in this chapter.

The first three sections of Chapter 2 provide us with a basis for understanding the process in which the Sorbs become constructed as a unified people with a common origin, shared history, language and tradition in a unitary structure which has existed in a continuum. However, this way of constructing the Sorbs as *one* people under the overarching rubric of nationalist projects not only naively straitjackets the populace at large as mere bearers of the Sorbian culture, but it also stifles the vitality of Sorbian culture. Therefore, last but not least, the last part of Chapter 2 locates Sorbian-ness in the modern world. The report *So langsam wird's Zeit. Kulturelle Perspektiven der Sorben in Deutschland* (It's About Time. Cultural Perspectives of the Sorbs in Germany) (1994) will help us to uncover the problems of nailing down Sorbian culture, while also offering an analysis of the aims of and measures for the promotion of Sorbian culture. As the report argues, the desideratum for the Sorbian culture and people is how to enhance the vitality, liveliness and viability of Sorbian culture.

In the forthcoming chapters, I will analyze the results of the empirical research which I gathered during fieldwork. I will deal with the interviewees' everyday life practices because they provide us with a renewed scope for observing how people construct their identities. By focusing on the practices and experiences of day-to-day life, the individuals are liberated from their role of passive objects of their culture. They are rehabilitated as social and cultural actors who actively handle culture. What is more, I will explore the idea that the cultural practices constructed by experience in everyday life help us to perceive how social actors interact and communicate inside and outside a group without being barred in a "cultural dungeon" (Greverus 1996: 128) or imprisoned in an "ethnic jail". One of the results of this is that gendered life experiences and women's abilities and intentions become more visible because observation is angled at their experiences and practices.

In Chapter 3, "A DIALECTIC PROCESS OF ETHNICIZATION AND ETHNICITY", I begin to close in subjects' life worlds by observing how they construct their ethnic identity. However, it must be noted that the construction of their ethnic identity cannot be conceived of in binary terms, but should rather be examined in a reciprocal process involving ethnicization and ethnicity. Each section of this chapter will be devoted to one of these two processes. The first part centers around the idea that

the construction of the Sorbs, especially womanhood, in the Sorbian community grows out of the essence of "being Othered" and starts with a discussion about the historical term "*Sorbische Amme*" (Sorbian wet nurse) and the relevant phenomenon "*Ammendasein*" (life as a wet nurse). Following this, I will take two women's experiences of being ethnicized as a case-in-point showing how they were placed as outsiders in the gaze of dominant others. The second part of this chapter will look at how the women interviewed for this study are positioned within the Sorbian discourse that says women are tied up in the ethnic collectivity in the sense of having to maintain and reproduce their culture on the one hand, and having to convey boundary-making to show and to keep their Sorbian-ness inherent in Sorbian language on the other. As illustrated in my case studies, women are especially held accountable for bestowing their children with the Sorbian language because the element of language has been accorded predominant significance in the construction of Sorbian ethnicity. In this sense, women come to symbolize the "forced" maternal duties and are actually "Othered" within their own community. Furthermore, I will elaborate on why and how some individuals interviewed ascribe the Sorbian collectivity to themselves and mark themselves from the German people. I am interested in examining which factors and strategies are employed by my informants to pronounce their Sorbian identity in this process and why they think it is important to assert their ethnic identity.

Ethnicity is one of the factors which constitute a woman's identity. However, it has to be noted that ethnic identity is only one of their identities in the modern world. The women interviewed for this study have other identities that are constructed through sets of difference, such as gender, ethnicity, culture, religion etc.. At the same time, women's positions are articulated through a variety of factors within their life experiences which are interwoven with collective histories, cultural experiences, social relations and political structures. Everyday life is thus germane to the goal of canvassing how these women construct their multiple identities in various contexts. By drawing on their culture of everyday life and their gendered life experiences, women of ethnic minorities, such as the Sorbs, will be rehabilitated here from the status of static and fixed figures in ethnic contexts. Furthermore, women's practices and experiences change the process of a supposedly bound, enclosed and coherent identity construction into a process of never-ending identification in which a variety of differences superpose and negotiate in regards to gender, ethnic, cultural, social and geographic aspects. As a consequence, in Chapter 4, "IDENTITIES THROWN TOGETHER – EVERYDAY LIFE EXPERIENCES", I will offer an analysis of women's practices and experiences in everyday life by focusing on their work, their attitudes toward raising their children, leisure activities, vacations, media consumption and musical practices.

In Chapter 4, the multi-facetted practices of my informants in quotidian life will allow us to recognize their compounded experiences of identity which they construct in direct relation to the different others in each temporal and spatial context. This can best be seen in the process in which one woman assumes different positions when she interacts and communicates with her colleagues at her workplace, with her children and family, or when she takes a vacation abroad. The women's identity construction is therefore not only seen as a dynamic process, but also as compound and manifold. What is more, women are also neither the passive bearers of Sorbian culture, nor the predetermined and unchanging embodiment of Sorbian collectivity. Instead, they are

rather acting agents who are capable of actively working with culture and dealing with the particular situations in which they are located.

The analysis in Chapter 4 will facilitate our understanding of identity construction from assorted points of view of day-to-day life. In Chapter 5, "POSITIONINGS AND REPOSITIONINGS ACROSS CULTURES, GENDERS AND IDENTITIES", I will discuss the permanently changing process of identification which dismantles hermetic and unitary views of identity. More importantly, I will show how the power of redefining gives the established Sorbian discourse of ethnic identity, culture and gender new meaning. This is especially meaningful when looking at how the women interviewed actually deal with several cultural resources denoting Sorbian-ness, such as traditional costumes and customs, into which I have already delved in earlier chapters (see Chapters 2.2 and 2.3). Furthermore, the idea that the concept of "homeland" is geographically connected to "Sorbian Lusatia", a notion that has constituted an essential element of Sorbian identity, undergoes a transformation of meaning which is particularly clear in women's involvement in Sorbian organizations and their activities in cities outside of Lusatia. Accordingly, in the second section of Chapter 5 I will look into how the idea of "homeland" is interpreted, perceived and created by women who live in Berlin and Dresden. In the third section of Chapter 5, I will continue to explore how some women acquire a sense of self in a restless process of interacting and communicating with others. This shows the oscillation between positioning and repositioning in their process of constructing their identities. Difference plays a key role in this process. That is to say, it is necessary to think identities with and through difference. The process in which identity becomes marked by difference and how difference becomes inscribed on identity will be investigated. Two case studies will draw on the everyday life experiences of my informants and will reveal a new understanding of the meaning of the term "ethnic identity". In addition to these cases, difference within the female gender between Eastern and Western Germany will be the third issue to be dealt with in this chapter. The social complexities resulting from the Reunification of Germany provide a larger social structure with which to inspect how Sorbian women, as Eastern German women, interact with Western German women in terms of the construction of womanhood and motherhood.

1.4 Research and Fieldwork Approaches

Before I started conducting fieldwork, I visited the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen in November 2001. I had a short stay there to collect some basic information about the Sorbs and familiarize myself roughly with the region where I was going to research. In summer 2002, I took part in the International Summer School in Sorbian Language and Culture held by the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen. The language courses, lectures, activities, and interaction with the teachers and staff during Summer School formed the basis my relations with the Sorbs. After Summer School, I began to interview eight women, whom I was referred to by the Sorbian Institute, and one group of four young girls and a woman who my Sorbian teacher in Summer School referred me to. I undertook fieldwork again in the late autumn and winter of 2003. I conducted interviews with some of the women whom I had already talked to in 2002 (6 people) in order to clarify some things in the first interviews and to add new questions. I also

conversed with 14 new informants, some of whom I was referred to by the researchers of the Sorbian Institute, while some were introduced to me by my informants from 2002. During fieldwork in 2002 and 2003, I interviewed 27 people[21]. In addition to the above fieldwork done in March 2002 and 2003, and during the period from the end March to the middle of April 2007, I also visited several informants with whom I still continue to correspond. In terms of interviews, I conducted open-ended interviews on specific topics which were of my choosing. The topics of my interview guideline included personal particulars, biographical facts, family life (language usage in the family, raising children), work (housework, paid work), friends, leisure activities, vacations, celebrations, cultural consumption (media, music), and external structures (social and political impact before and after the Reunification of Germany and differences between Western Germany and Eastern Germany). For the four women who are not of Sorbian descent, I added the following question of when, why and how they came into contact with and identify themselves with the Sorbian people and Sorbian culture. For those who live in Berlin and Dresden, I also inquired as to why they live in these cities, how they perceive the cities where they live and their involvement in the Sorbian organizations in these cities.

As to the occupations of my research subjects, initially I intended to interview people from all walks of life as much as possible, however, most of those researched can be defined as intellectuals in their group. One-third of the interviewees are teachers, who teach Sorbian or subjects in Sorbian at schools. Another one-third of the women devote themselves to the arts, such as painting, music, theater, and writing, most of which has to do with the spheres of Sorbian culture. Other women under study include a nurse, bakery owners, and a woman who used to work on a collective farm in the former East Germany. Still others are university students, a school student, and job trainees. As indicated previously, the Sorbian Institute referred me to the majority of the women studied. This indeed helped me to find people who were ready to talk to me, especially in the early period of the fieldwork, in which I needed to get to know Sorbian people through whom I could get access to the "field".[22] However, on the other side, the social backgrounds of the informants were consequently more or less homogenized, as a good number are teachers, artists and university/college graduates. These people of higher education, according to Pierre Bourdieu (2002 [1984]), have a high volume of capital, particularly cultural capital, which means they have certain resources not at the disposal of other social classes. What is relevant to my study is that their cultural capital gives them authority to define Sorbian-ness, Sorbian culture and language. Moreover, they are in the position to express their views to the general public and their involvement in the respective work field and exert influence over their peers and younger generation, particularly those involved in education.

Although they share a somewhat homogenous social background, it is, however, important to note that interviewees in this investigation will not be framed by a

[21] See Appendix for an overview of interviewees' biographical facts in this study.

[22] I noticed that this somewhat homogenous social background of most of these women under study after I started to connect them, I therefore tried to find people from other social milieus. For example, I talked to a young waitress at the Sorbian restaurant *Wjelbik* in Bautzen when I had my lunch there. I asked her if she was willing to be interviewed by me. She gave me her cell phone number and said I could call her and set up an appointment (August 8, 2002). I tried calling her the next day but the number she gave me was not in use.

conventional viewpoint concerning ethnic minority. Instead, they have various processes of identification that occur at the same time, or one after the other, or for a certain period of time, or longer in the course of their life. In her research on the comparison of Sorbs in Germany and Sami in Finland regarding the examination and discussion on minority rights as identity resources, Reetta Toivanen (2001: 13) raises an important perspective when looking at minorities: First of all, it is inappropriate to assume minorities are simply communities which exist. Secondly, it is a mistake to expect that "minority researchers" not only to describe minorities, but also to mark out the boundaries which minorities are limited. She puts great store in thinking of her informants as those who devote themselves to minority movements and to fighting for and keeping their rights, but besides their dedication to their group, they do have other interests and identifications which they want to maintain as well. In this regard, Toivanen's perception recapitulates the emphasis underlined in this study – any deterministic and essentialist viewpoint concerning ethnicity is discarded, and I reject the idea that the ethnic group is assumed to be a homogeneous group. Furthermore, Barth's version of ethnicity (1969, 1994) – that the ethnic group is seen as a social organization, and people's sense of identity is the result of experience and social interaction – takes center stage in this investigation. For this reason, four of the interviewees in this study are of non-Sorbian descent. They gain their own set of experiences by interacting with the Sorbs, for instance, through learning the Sorbian language, making friends with Sorbs, marriage and work. Their identification with the Sorbs, which they consider to be one of their identities, is consequently formed and certainly constantly evolving as well.

In terms of the fieldsite, in addition to Lusatia (primarily Bautzen and the surrounding villages, but also Cottbus), Dresden and Berlin are also locations where I undertook research. It is widely recognized that Lusatia is considered as the homeland of the Sorbs. It is especially commonly claimed that the Sorbs have lived there for more than a thousand years, as exemplified in introductory brochures on the Sorbs or in history books about the Sorbs. However, as Römhild (1998) has demonstrated, "homeland" or "territory of identity" is not a bound, inhabited area, but rather a territory where people's cultural practices of everyday life take place and where the concept of "territory" has to be defined in plurality because the broadly differentiated activities of daily actions occupy the same terrain and each single territory of everyday life hence interconnects. Moreover, a "field" in this study is not thought of as a bound, localized community, but rather as a linkage of multiple social-political locations (Gupta & Ferguson 1997) that are constructed via actors' interaction and communication. Therefore, I chose Dresden and Berlin, where numerous Sorbs live, according to my informants, so that I can extend the space of experience and communication outside the conventionally defined "Sorb's homeland". Besides, the interpretations and opinions of people living in Dresden and Berlin could be regarded as a supplement to or as resonating with, or as voicing opposition to people living in Lusatia. In this way, it is my belief that the internal dialogue among the Sorbs is progressing.

In this research, participant observation and open-ended interviews with specific topics are applied as the main approaches of generating my anthropological knowledge of the Sorbs.

1.4.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is taken as a principal field methodology. Involvement is characterized by spatial co-presence and synchronous companionship (Amann & Hirschauer 1997) with those interviewed on field sites where research is conducted. The engagement in a deep and meaningful relationship which opens the gate for the ethnographer to understand the Other. For German ethnologists José Mulder van de Graaf and Richard Rottenburg, who address ethnographic explorations in one's own society by focusing on fieldwork in companies, "participation observation is necessary because social reality is divided into different levels that relate to each other in complex ways[23](1989: 21). Social reality stretches out into numerous dimensions of ordinary everyday occurrences. However, we cannot ignore that in the process of understanding the Other in an anthropological observation, two fundamental aspects emerge: one is notions, and the other is actions (1989: 22). These can be further divided into two models when we speak of understanding foreign cultures: 1. representational, i.e. what it is, what it can be or what it may be; 2. operational, i.e. what and how to do things, or what and how a thing is supposed to be done (ibid.). Only talking to those studied would limit the ethnographer's understanding of people's lives. Furthermore, the ethnographer has little chance to confront the informants' own motives for their actions. Moreover, by just interviewing, he or she probably receives information and insight into thinking which describe something that should ideally be or should be done, but not what is done actually.

Participant observation is conducive to solving the difficulties noted above. The fieldworker can thus connect people's saying with their doings. It is also advantageous to be a participant observer during fieldwork, according to Friedrichs (1973: 89), because "interaction in complex fields of action"[24] can be observed. The participant observer is absolutely not a "moving camera", as Friedrichs calls it, but rather a participant who takes on a social role and has his/her social life as lived experience and experienced practice in the surroundings in which fieldwork is undertaken. The observer also develops connections with his/her researched subjects. But taking part in the life of a population studied doesn't mean "going native", rather it is a constant wavering to and fro between "emic" and "etic". Myerhoff captures one of the central qualities of participant observation: "being inside and outside at the same time" (1980: 18).

During my fieldwork, participant observation was conducted in the following settings: in the events and celebrations arranged by the Sorbian Institute during Summer School; in interviewees' families or at their workplace, including the interaction between informants and their families and their colleagues; in ordinary activities; and in some Sorbian institutions, such as the Sorbian Institute, where I visited often during my stay in Bautzen for gathering information and reading, therefore I made use of this chance to observe some of the daily work of the institute and the interaction among the employees or among the employees and the library users. The

[23] Cf. Teilnehmende Beobachtung ist erforderlich, weil sich gesellschaftliche Realtität in verscheidene Ebene teilt, die kompex aufeinander bezogen sind.
[24] Cf. Interaktion in komplexen Handlungsfeldern.

employment of this approach helped me especially to observe the activities and daily encounters of the people studied and their interaction with those around them. While a significant dimension of this ethnographic method has to be underscored here, it played a part in my entrance into the field, how I positioned myself socially in it, and how I interacted with my informants – which role I am allocated by the people studied. As noted earlier, attending Summer School in Bautzen was my first step in entering the field. But unexpectedly, the role in which I perceive myself, as a researcher, though an anthropological novice, was reversed at the very beginning in fieldwork. I was interviewed and photographed three times by the local newspaper.[25] Among other things, the headline of the report in *Sächsische Zeitung* (Saxony Newspaper) read, "Sorbisch erobert Fernen Osten" – I was "conquered" by the Sorbian culture. Let us ignore the exaggeration of this headline by the journalist to make this article attractive and interesting to readers; what I am trying to demonstrate is that I, the researcher, was made an object in this setting.

I assume the two reasons why I was chosen to be interviewed had to do with the fact that among 51 participants, I was the only one from East Asia, and I am researching the Sorbs as the focus of my doctoral dissertation. Besides being interviewed myself, due to my foreignness, upon meeting my informants, some of them were curious about culture and everyday life in my country or in Asia. As the above happenings in the field illustrate, the social position I was put in and the encounters with people studied is decided at the very inception of the entrance into the field sites. As German cultural anthropologist Gisela Welz addresses in her fieldwork experience in a slum in New York, she advances the view that the decision of the ethnographer to approach a foreign culture in a communicative and understanding way stands in direct relation to the readiness of people studied to allow him or her insight and entry into their culture (1991: 80). As Welz puts it, following Kutzschenbach "The ethnographer is from the beginning not 'socially free-floating' […] but is put into a category by the locals. […] His first contacts already determine him socially" (ibid.).

This role ascription by the people studied also suggests that I am both subject and object of the study on both sides and at the same time alternatively. This swaying between being research subject and object, back and forth, connotes that this hybridization of being both a subject and an object in the fieldwork endeavor (Amann & Hirschauer 1997: 26) renders it possible to receive information and to obtain documents, the genesis and character of which can be inspected, situationally understood and contextually relativized in observation[26](ibid.).

1.4.2 Interviewing

In this study, open-ended interviews with specific themes are basically employed for data collection. Interviews are conducted in various forms, meaning that interview types overlap and blend: informal interviews, which merge and mix with conversation and embedded questions; retrospective interviews, with some life stories (especially with the elder interviewees); and narrative interviews. These interview types are

[25] *Serbske Nowiny*, July 16, 2002; *Sächsische Zeitung* July 20/21, 2002; *Nowy Casnik*, August 10, 2002.
[26] Cf. Auskünfte zu erzeugen und Dokumente zu gewinn, deren Genese und Zuschnitt mit Beobachtung überprüfbar, situativ verstehbar und kontextuell relativierbar sind.

categorized as fieldwork techniques and methods to compile information for analysis. However, "ero-epic" conversation characterizes the relationship between interviewer and interviewees. In his book on fieldwork methods, Austrian sociologist Roland Girtler advocates the conception of "ero-episch"- conversation (2001: 147ff.) as main method for interview in the course of doing ethnography. The term "ero-epic" stems from ancient Greek words "Erotema" and "Epos". "Erotema" means "questions" or "eromai" suggests asking (*fragen*), questioning (*befragen*) and investigation (*nachforschen*). "Epos" implies "narration" (*Erzählung*), news (*Nachricht*), tidings (*Kunde*), *Götterspruch* and "epion" connotes "narrate" (*erzählen*). This concept, dating back to Homer's tradition, refers to the fact that "questions and narration are elaborately and artistically interwoven with each other in conversation."[27] The employment of "ero-epic" conversation centers around the idea that it is about narration and histories that very much relate to cultures or groups. In the course of conversation, not only are the researcher and researched students, but the relationship between researcher and researched is decided by the principle of equality. As Girtler elaborates further, "ero-epic" conversation doesn't inchoate with questioning, but rather mostly with the researcher's narration of his/her way of working and in what he/she is interested. When using this practice, the interest of those researched is consequently awakened and they begin to narrate.

My motives in using this "ero-epic" technique is grounded on the symmetrical positions that interviewer and interviewees take during interviews. In my case, I usually began with talking about what I was going to do during the interview and why I am interested in the Sorbs. By commencing with these topics, my background of being a member of an ethnic minority in Taiwan reveals itself slowly. Resting on this communication base, a "sense of collective membership" (Amann & Hirschuer 1997: 25) takes shape between us. Also established on this foundation, they asked me or I told them about some similar experiences that I have had in my country. They found it interesting to know about another country and culture. What is more is that both of us were impressed by our shared experiences and would then comment, "It's the same everywhere!"

My experience of being a minority member makes it easier for me to follow what my informants are trying to express while these common feelings and happenings, however, at the same time hinder me from discerning their processes and strategies in constructing identities. I chose the ethnic identity construction as the very first questions to pose my interviewees during interview taking, but I had problems connecting my abstract concepts with the realities of their everyday life. First of all, I felt my interviewees were uneasy about my questions, and the worst experience was when one of them seemed a little annoyed with my question regarding why she thinks she is not a proper Sorb. Although instead of masking, she talked about the painful realties, I still could feel she was "sullen". So oppressive was the situation that we sat in silence for a while. Secondly, I had difficulty analyzing the interviews conducted in 2002 because the conventional definitions and characteristics of Sorbian identity construction, such as language, traditional costumes, etc., lingered in my analysis and I could not free myself of them. What I do intend is to explore new terrains in analyzing

[27] Cf. Fragen und Erzählungen werden kunstvoll miteinander in Gespräch verworben.

the identity construction of the Sorbs. But emphatically I would not put my veto on my interim fieldwork report from 2002, unsatisfied und frustrated as I am with it. Instead, I see the results as a basis for future research and also as a turning point for redirecting my way to the Sorbs.

Because of the twofold awkwardness as stated above, I decided to change my previous interview questions and begin with "everyday life". In considering how to operate the Sorbian identity construction between two cultures from the angle of the practices in everyday life is seen as a way out of the predicament in which the conventional and clichéd discourses are stuck.[28] Questions concern work, marriage, circle of friends, parties, celebrations, festivals, leisure activities, media consumption, vacation-taking.

1.5 Encountering Myself and the Interconnection with Those Researched

In the preceding section, I talked about my research and fieldwork approaches. In this section, I am going to discuss how my sense of self developed and by what means the Other is understood in my research. To borrow Greverus' phrase, "on the road and in the field" (Greverus 1996: 156) is confronting the Other directly and looking for the tête-à-tête communication with the Other (ibid.). And exactly through the social interaction with the people researched in the field or maybe even after fieldwork is where the researcher's identity is constructed and produced accordingly. As British academic Amanda Coffey noted,

> [...] fieldwork is personal, emotional and identity work. The construction and production of self and identity occurs both during and after fieldwork. In writing, remembering and representing our fieldwork experiences we are involved in processes of self presentation and identity construction. (1999: 1)

In this process of conducting fieldwork, I learned of some interconnection between my subjects and myself.

Through all the fieldwork endeavors, the boundaries between my informantss and me become no longer rigid; instead, they become fluid and blurred. Ostensibly a neat dichotomy based on skin colors (white vs. yellow), ethnic belonging/nationalities (Sorbian/German vs. Hakka/Taiwanese), cultural background (European vs. Asian) as well as the positions in the research as a whole (those researched vs. the researcher), becomes gradually dimmer. The factors involved are twofold: first of all, we belong to one of the ethnic minorities in our respective countries. In spite of a different historical context and development, enclosed surroundings, and the interaction with the numerically, politically and economically dominant ethnic groups, the same general problems and the following issues are often pointed out, among others: how to make the language survive, especially when it is spoken by fewer and fewer people; how to fight for the rights as an ethnic minority; how to vitalize the cultures; how to craft an

[28] I am grateful to Elka Tschernokoshewa and Cordula Ratajczak respectively for their discussion with me on this issue and for giving me some insightful inspiration.

image of a culture that can be of interest to youths; how to break out of the prejudice of others. Although these issues as stated above make groups of people referred to seem stuck in the conventional conception about ethnic groups – linking people, culture and ethnicity in essentializing bonds – yet, they do exist among general public. However, it is central for us to inquire into why such ideas are prevalent among people. Anderson's widely acclaimed work on the "imagined community" (1983) offers us a gateway to scrutinize by what means, by which strategy, and in what process this nationally, or ethnically imagined, community emerges. Significantly, Anderson's view makes it clear that the well-established idea of equating group, culture, ethnicity, territory and language is not "natural", but rather constructed. Yet people can't resist this "halo of disinterestedness" (1983: 131) and devote themselves to these seemingly "natural ties".

Secondly, the long-lasting political structures and the subsequent upheavals bridge the cultural gap between us. Most of my informants have grown up in a communist society – the former *Deutsche Democratische Republik* (German Democratic Republic, hereafter *DDR*), and then came the Reunification of Germany, while I have experienced the authoritarism under Chiang's regime – Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo – until the repeal of the martial law employed for 38 years in 1987 which was successively followed by the process of transformation into democracy. Although being governed by communism and authoritarism are two different realms of experiences, it is linked by an essential analogy. For instance, this could be illustrated by the education system under political party-state-in-one regimes: the "Bolshevik ideology" in *DDR* aimed to educate for *Kollektiv*, and "control, discipline, obedience, and repression" were emphasized in school education (Bornemann 1992: 243). High school students in Taiwan were educated in a similar way in that we were oppressed by hair-length regulations, uniforms and military training courses in senior high schools, etc.

The political change as noted above inaugurates the beginning of the new era for the people who have encountered and experienced the past and been formed by it, no matter what the aspects are referring to the individual or to his/her belonging groups. Better chances and more possibilities for the development and improvement of the autonomy of personality as well as the status and deserved rights of the ethnic minorities are guaranteed, to say the least (I do not intend to deal here with the contentious arguments and issues at stake regarding the unity of the two Germanys.).

The convoluted disappearance of the clear-cut line between my informants and myself as stated earlier is discussed from the angle of our shared experience, while the interaction with the subjects of my investigation obscures the distinction between us and subverts the researcher/researched polarities. This could operate on the following three levels: the educational background of those researched, their occupation, and their feedback I received when I handed the interim report of the interview analysis to some of the informants.

Most of women studied are college or university graduates or have a similar degree. One is an academic with a PhD in natural science, and another one is a graduate student working on her doctoral thesis. My experience with these intellectuals has so far not resembled what happened to the Irish ethnographer Elizabeth Sheehan who made Irish scholars the subject of her research (1993). She struggled with the powerful preconception that foreign ethnographers would not present the country and its people as it is. As a result, she wrestled with the question of what is not harmful to write, a

decision conditioned by her junior academic status, foreignness and her concern for the division between the public and private lives of the nationally-renown informants. In the process of encountering the informants, I also floundered because of my foreignness and junior academic status, just as Sheehan does, but I was not under harsh criticism from them nor did I become irritated because of uncomfortable requests, such as those Sheehan is faced with and through which she was stymied (Sheehan 1993: 81f.).

Not only their educational level, but also their occupation, such as teachers, artists and doctor, or even those who devote themselves to the Sorbian affairs, makes the boundaries between us merge and we could even cross over to the opposite side. There are various examples of how our seemingly distinct positions are changed: without exception, during my fieldwork, before I started to interview the informants, the very first question they put to me was why I chose the Sorbs as the topic of my dissertation. And the nexus to this question was that they would ask for some details about the ethnic groups in Taiwan and related issues concerning language, the development and the contemporary situation and so on. One of those researched even took notes very seriously.

Beginning with the inquiries of those interviewed into my research motivation, followed by the affiliated talk relevant to the situation about my background and my country, in my mind, this interaction forms itself into a "skilful collage" (Greverus 1996: 135) – because both of us are on our way to acquiring the ability to understand the Other and to be understood by the Other. The impact of this interaction will not end when our conversation stops; on the contrary, it is molding "new 'dialogic' (solitary) and 'boundless' (dynamic) conceptions of life" (ibid.). Furthermore, by talking with the informants, a process for building new notions of life is started. For me, and there is no doubt such is the case, as a consequence of fieldwork, I attained the key to the door to reexamine my own experience as a minority-member. The attitude toward the keeping and passing-on a mother tongue is a prime example. One of the informants depicted her daughter's experience in learning Sorbian. Her daughter could be seen as a Sorbian native speaker, according to one of the definitions of mother tongue: origin, or the first learned language (Skutnabb-Kangas 1992: 44). But later on, as she has grown up, she started refusing to speak her "mother tongue". Instead, she prefers speaking German. My informants and her husband respect her daughter's decision not to speak Sorbian. She said, "We haven't influenced our child nationally in any way."[29] They don't take such stance as some of their group fellows do, "You are Sorb. You have to speak Sorbian." [30] Her perspective regarding learning and speaking her mother tongue prompted me to rethink the standpoint from which I took earlier: I am Hakka, so I have to learn to speak it fluently.[31] But now, a plausible reasoning for me is that each language, no matter if it is a mother tongue or a foreign language, is deemed as a window to broaden our view on this world. Skutnabb-Kangas' definition of mother tongue (ibid.) enables me to understand the meaning of native tongue from different angles. The other three defining criteria are as follows: 1) competence – the language

[29] Cf. Wir haben nicht national, unser Kind irgendwie geprägt (interview with Elenore, September 25, 2003, in Bautzen).
[30] Cf. Du bist Sorbe, du muss Sorbisch sprechen (interview with Elenore, September 25, 2003, in Bautzen).
[31] I understand Hakka well, but I can only formulate simple sentences.

which one masters; 2) function – the language which one uses most of time and 3) identification – internal (one identifies oneself with the language) and external (others identify the speaker as a native speaker). Skutnabb-Kangas has three theses for the above definitions: 1) the same person can have different mother tongues, it depends on which definition is employed; 2) one person can change his/her native tongues during his/her life, also in multiple and in accordance with all the other three definitions except that of origin; 3) the definitions of mother tongues can be ordered hierarchically, according to the extent of sensitivity for linguistic human rights in one society.

Skutnabb-Kangas provides us with a multi-level process of implying a "mother tongue". Furthermore, it illustrates that the so-called native language is constructed and chosen by speakers, rather than being naturally and biological given. The selection of the mother tongue points out the question of what people feel is a mother tongue. This query indicates that the option of a native language actually denotes that modern individuals achieve and choose their identity actively without being meshed in bonds of traditional or natural determination, such as biological decent, skin color, language, and so on. They are also able to design their lives. Skutnabb-Kangas' theses signify to some extent that people are not monolingual, but rather polyglot, in a sense. The idea of the polyglot is celebrated in opposition to "God-given seriousness and foundational value of mother tongues" (van der Veer 1997: 94), as feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti put it. She herself was born in Italy, raised in Australia, educated in Paris, and is now teaching in the Netherlands, "a person who is in transit between the languages, neither here nor there, knows better than to believe in steady identities and mother tongues" (Braidotti 1993: 32f., quoted in van der Veer 1997: 94).

Disregarding the content of my research questions, the informant working on her doctoral dissertation interrogated me about my research and interview method when we met for the first time, asking how many interviews I was going to do, how I compiled the name list of the interviewees, to whom I was going to talk, what kind of interviews I conducted (fully structured, semi-structured, questionnaires, or open-ended). Last but not least, she asked about the definition of the concept taken in my dissertation title, primarily how "identity construction" is defined. As an anthropological novice gathering data for my first major piece of ethnographic writing, I had feelings of insecurity; nevertheless, I depicted my modus operandi to her, and asked to know her opinions and experience regarding her own thesis. Notwithstanding the fact that she explained her research procedure to me carefully and patiently, my "new anxiety about the field", to adapt Bernd Jürgen Warneken and Andreas Wittel's phrase (1997), was mediated by these friendly but intellectually challenging questions. Therefore, in this aspect, this post-graduate student is no longer as my interviewee, instead, she is an academic peer who not only provides me and also opposes me with her experience in daily life but also her academic knowledge for my research. Although we do our Ph.D. study in different disciplines in human science, one of the research methods we applied to gather the empirical data is the same: conducting interviews. Her knowledge concerning interview methods made me rethink what I've learned from my studies, and also defend myself with perspectives of cultural anthropology against her viewpoints. I tried to explain what I intended to do in interviews. Moreover, the fieldwork I did in 2002 was my first ethnographic endeavor, which is regarded as a test for further fieldwork. This confrontation could be delineated precisely, as Warneken and Wittel

write, "[...] those researched are confronted with oppositional knowledge from another discipline, continuing the "war of the disciplines" outside the university"[32] (1997: 6).

Thanks to the interviews with my informants during the first period of fieldwork, I found some of their opinions and viewpoints insightful to my research. Therefore I thought I could present my interim interview analysis to them in order to let them comment on it, and I am sure their feedback will surely add new dimensions to my interpretation, despite the fact that I know they will contest my perspectives. As the discussion in the introduction of *When They Read What We Write* (Brettell 1993) illustrates, feedback delineates the relationship between the anthropological writers and the audience of readers, including our informants, or members of our informant's society, for instance, native scholars or native press. The examples included and the experiences of the ethnographers in this book show us strong negative reactions from the natives to what the anthropologists write, by which the politics of ethnographic writing and anthropologists and texts are impacted. In my case, I didn't confront any unfriendliness, displeasure or any negative reaction from my informants, and I see their remarks as a spur to review my own perspective in writing about them. Among others, one of the interviewees has tackled the research of her own family since then, and she was asked to write an article about herself and the subsequent identity issue she's faced with in one book about the Sorbs and Lusatia. She didn't make any assessment of my analysis, but she started with the discussion of some issues she also dealt with in her article in accordance with the empirical examples and theoretical stances taken in my writing.

The above example illuminates which role informants play in the process of conducting ethnography. What my informant did marks her engagement in the theoretical practices of my research. As American anthropologist Michael Herzfeld remarks in his book with an anthropological overview on theoretical practice in culture and society (2001), theories are seen as "expressions of a social and political orientation and as a heuristic devices for exploring social reality, rather than as the instruments of pure intellect, the theories become visible in unsuspected places" (2001: 7). This theoretical practice is "through the performance of directly comparable intellectual operations" (ibid.). In this sense, my informant could be deemed a producer of abstract social knowledge by not only reading what I write, but also through her involvement in writing her identification process and in tracing her family history.

To sum up, the relation between people studied and myself is fluid, which I have already demonstrated earlier. Such way of interacting between researcher and researched could be indicated as a reflexive approach of cultural processes. Reflexivity, is thus a key word in this discussion. Before departing on an anthropological discussion on the term "reflexivity", Anthony Giddens' concern (1990) could cast anchor in grasping general ideas on reflexivity in social life. Giddens claims:

> There is fundamental sense in which reflexivity is a defining characteristic of all human action. All human beings routinely 'keep in touch' with the grounds of what they do as an integral element of doing it. I have called this elsewhere the 'reflexive monitoring of action'. (1990: 36)

[32] Cf. […] die Forschenden mit einem aus anderen Wissenschaften stammenden Gegenwissen konfrontiert warden, dass sich der 'Streit der Fakultäten' also im außenuniversitäten Feld fortsetzt.

For Giddens, human actions incorporate a consistent and never-to-be-relaxed monitoring of behavior and its contexts. Furthermore, in modern societies, reflexivity, which develops a different character, is introduced into the very basis of system reproduction, as that thought and action are constantly refracted "back upon one another" (1990: 38). In Giddens' account, modern societies are driven and animated by reflexivity in that "social practices are constantly examinated and reformed in the light of becoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character. […] All forms of social life are partly constituted by actor's knowledge of them" (ibid.).

Giddens' concept of reflexivity could be summarized as an ongoing reexamination and monitoring of human action and its contexts, from which the knowledge of social life is generated. In my view, the ethnographer rediscovers and inspects his/her cultural understandings about the Other by having information that is brought about by the knowledge of those researched of social practices. This surveying attempt of the ethnographer undergoes a process of reflexive approach. In the course of doing ethnography, through interaction between the population studied and fieldworker, knowledge of social practices is generated, since the feedback of the informants, who get involved in theoretical practices of ethnography and at the same time act as producers of social knowledge, gives the ethnographer an impetus to reexamine his/her cultural assumption of the culture being studied. Herzfeld claims:

> The most useful kind of reflexivity […] not that of pure self-examination, but the kind that places the cultural assumption of the ethnographer in question – that clarifies the ethnographic encounters and its limitations as predicated upon the imperfect meshing of two different codes, with its multiplicity of divergent identities and presuppositions. This kind of reflexivity is genuinely empirical (but not empiricist), and it is deployed to a specific purpose, that of intensifying (perhaps a better term the progressivist "improving") the analysis." (Herzfeld 2001: 45f.)

Herzfeld emphasizes, it is this reflexivity, that the main empirical thrust of anthropology is thus amplified.

Herzfeld contends that reflexivity refers to culture rather than the self. As he notes further, personal and sociocultural reflexivity should be distinguished because reflexive exercises for seeing cultural practices in comparative contexts offer more insight than self-introspection. Three reasons for this are (2001: 46f.): 1) people studied are ethnographically and empirically accessible, i.e. those researched are no longer frozen in a timeless frame, rather they as subjects acting in real social spaces and at specific historical moments, taking part in processes; 2) if one sees the actions of the population studied under the conditions of the first thesis, it becomes obvious that people's practices give form and substance to cultural artifacts so that often their followers have the ability to grasp the sense of a structured order that encourages conformity and sets the standard against which rebellion acquires its identity; 3) anthropologists have to define the cultural conditions under which they feel able to make evaluations of the psychological motivation of those researched. According to Herzfeld, those conditions may include an extensive way of approaching the cultural idioms in which emotions are

represented and letting these furnish a helpful starting point against which to lean our own assessments. Reflexivity, as Herzfeld writes, is conducive to attaining perspective scope for discerning cultures rather than to presumed essentializing and a homogeneous view of a culture (2001: 47).

In my reading of Herzfeld's elucidations on the concept of reflexivity, the idea concerning the practical theorizing of social actors sets the leading tone. The author elaborates that the process in which anthropological knowledge and theoretical formulations is generated is influenced by people anthropologists study. For Herzfeld, the "anthropological epistemology" of the people under anthropological investigation can't be separated from those who have anthropology as a profession and academic sphere (2001: 22). Herzfeld's considerations on anthropological epistemologies could be lumped together with James Clifford's deliberation on ethnographic writing. "Partial truth", "constructed truth", "true fiction" (Clifford 1986: 7; Knecht & Welz 1995: 75) as mentioned by Clifford suggest that the cultural reality in ethnographic texts is constructed. Moreover, ethnography cannot avoid being influenced and thus be taken under control by power and history (Clifford 1986: 7). The ethnographer's cultural identity, chosen discipline and social status are inevitably included in ethnographic writing (Knecht & Welz 1995: 75). In Clifford's version of ethnographic practices, the notion of culture is under scrutiny, which resonates with Herzfeld's contemplation on the perception of studied culture and informants. As to the issue of cultural representation in ethnography, Clifford poses general trends toward a "specification of discourses" – "Who speaks? Who writes? When and where? With or to whom? Under what institutional and historical constraints? " (1986: 13) These serial questions denote that anthropologists are no longer soloists in the process of writing ethnography. Furthermore, these queries into the "crisis of representation" imply that not only the competence for adequate representation of the Other are put in question, but rather studied cultures are not still and silenced portrayals depicted by the researcher any longer. They are, however, "real people in real social settings", as noted earlier, and they resist (Knecht & Welz 1995: 76). For Clifford, culture is relational, and is generated in relationships and situations achieved through examination, discussion, argument with our counterparts in ethnographic encounters (ibid). In addition, Clifford rejects cultural identity as "an archaic survival, but defines as an ongoing process, politically contested and historically unfinished" (1988: 9; Knecht & Welz 1995: 97). He thus claims that a modern ethnography of conjunctures constantly moves between cultures (1988: 9). What is more, Clifford's self-reflexive considerations on ethnographic practices celebrates that in an interwoven world, one culture is always implicated in another (1988: 11) and "ethnography encounters others in relation to itself, while seeing itself as others" (1986: 23).

Finally, Ina-Maria Greverus' notion of "relational voice" (1995, 1996) is germane to describing the relationship between the people of my investigation and myself. At the same time, it echoes Herzfeld and Clifford as noted previously. Greverus' exploration into "dialogical research" involves the mutual interaction between the ethnographic fieldworker and population studied. As her reviewer Welz put it, their interactions ought to be flawlessly conducted and represented in a mode of mutual respect and reflexivity. It is a "relational voice". In this sense, "reflection and self-reflection become essential components of fieldwork as a communicative venture" (Welz 1997: 118). Furthermore,

“intersubjective” exchange in fieldwork is thus achieved through the reciprocal recognition of the cultural meanings of the other and through introspective reconsiderations of one’s owns cultural precepts (ibid.).

For the people I cooperated with in my fieldwork and myself, the “relational voice” made us enter a dialogical relationship, and the apparent distinction between us was then transformed into a kind of interconnection.

CHAPTER 2 THE EMERGENCE OF AN IMAGINED SORBIAN COMMUNITY

> A man [*sic*] without a nation defies the recognized categories and provokes revulsion. […] A man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears; a deficiency in any of these particulars is not inconceivable and does from time to time occur, but only as a result of some disaster, and it is itself a disaster of a kind. All this seems obvious, though, alas, it is not true. But that it should have come to *seem* so very obviously true is indeed an aspect, or perhaps the very core, of the problem of nationalism. Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such. (Gellner 1983: 6, emphasis Gellner's)

Gellner has pinpointed that a man (or woman) without a nation seems to have no legitimate existence in this world. Gellner's argument identifies nationality or nation-ness as an indispensable ascription for defining ourselves and others in our time. However, what I am more concerned about is that Gellner illustrates nations as constructions. More emphatically, it is nationalism that comes before nation. In the words of Gellner:

> Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as inherent […] political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turn them into nations, sometimes invents them and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that* is a reality. (1983: 48f., emphasis Gellner's)

Other scholars also share this viewpoint, for instance, Eric Hobsbawm stresses that the making of nations is generated by the elements of artifact, invention and social engineering and takes a view that "nations do not make states and nationalism but the other way round" (1990: 10).

For Gellner, who focuses on the political aspect of nation and nationalism, nations are modern constructs and their emergence is strongly associated with industrialization, urbanization and geographic mobility (see Chapter 1.2.1), while Anderson proposes a definition of the nation in an anthropological spirit. Anderson sees it as an imagined political community and as imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (1983: 15):

> It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or ever hear of them, yet in minds of each lives the image of their communion. [...] The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest part of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living humans, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. [...] It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. [...], nations dream of being free, [...]. The gage and emblem of this freedom is sovereign state. It is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the

> nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. (Anderson 1983: 15f., emphasis Anderson's)

Notwithstanding difference in the above approaches to nations and nationalism, nations are notably products of modernity. National cultures are also products of modern nation-states. The loyalty and identification given to tribes, people, religion and regions in pre-modern societies are gradually transferred to national culture in Western societies (Hall 1992a: 292, see also Chapter 1.2.1). Differences of ethnicity, gender, religion, class and locality are subsumed under the overarching frame of nation-states, so that a *homogenous* national unity with *the same* national culture can be pursued. The standardization of universal literacy, the generalization of a single vernacular language as the dominant medium of communication throughout the nation, the creation of a homogenous culture and the maintenance of national cultural institutions, such as mass education system, are products of the construction of a national culture. As Anderson emphatically argues, the printed language, for example, facilitates the standardization of knowledge and a link for people to feel connected and cohered with other fellow-members, whom they never meet and never hear of (1983).

In the process of nation-building, national intellectuals nationalize their culture in histories, language, literature, media, tradition, customs and everyday culture. This connects historical events, the imagination, landscapes, scenes, national symbols and rituals which represent the common experiences that give people meaning. National identities are constructed in a national culture that generates connotations of nation-ness with which people can identify. Most important of all, people's cultural distinctiveness is stimulated and their sense of attachment to their nation is therefore invoked and formed. The constitutive quality that national elites impose on ordinary people – fixed in such overt, distinctive features as origin of birth, history, family, language, village, customs, tradition and folklore – gives national identities an absolute quality, while at the same time national culture is rendered constant and continuous as if it were ancient.
The above considerations will work as a compass in this chapter in which I will endeavor to locate myself in relation to the Sorbs by asking the following questions: How is Sorbian-ness loaded with national value? Through which process and by what means is the homogenization of Sorbian culture pursued? Which national strategies are employed to tie every "Sorb" to the Sorbian community in a lasting way? How is Sorbian-ness imparted to every "Sorb" so that they think of Sorbian identity as part of their innate essence? All these questions are also closely related to the inquiry into how ethnicity is located and contextualized within the Sorbian nationalist projects. In dealing with these questions, it is very important to be aware that not only the above intellectual sources afford us a fundamental analytical window to the nation and nationalism, but also the Sorbian authors whose works deal with these themes, whom I will rely on to illustrate the processes of building a "Sorbian community" in this chapter, should be seen as actors who actively construct Sorbian-ness – in a nationalist manner. However, there are still other authors who not only identify themselves as Sorbs by drawing on Sorbian origin and language, but also those who work in Sorbian institutions and are involved in the construction of the Sorbian cultural discourse who also ought to be considered as actors who construct and deconstruct Sorbian-ness, ethnicity and gender.

The theoretical sources of nation and nationalism discussed above underline that nations are a construction despite their different perspectives and approaches. However, the gendering of nation is usually either ignored or naturalized as a male relationship in their works (see criticism in McClintock 1995, Alonso 1994, see also Chapter 1.1.1). Gellner's view as quoted at the very beginning helps us to be aware that national identities are not "natural", but implies that men are the national agents. Furthermore, he also defines nationhood on the basis of a male recognition of identity as exemplified in "men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as being from the same nation" (Gellner 1983: 7). Anderson's study brilliantly enlightens nationality, nation-ness and nationalism as cultural artifacts of a particular kind (1983: 13). One of his definitions of the circumstances of modern nationhood still relies on a connection between men: "The nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings" (1983: 16). Anderson characterizes nation as an imagined community of zealous brotherhood. However, as noted in Chapter 1.1.1, nationalist discourses are indeed gendered. The process of fashioning an imagined Sorbian community involves the construction of gender within the established meaning and value of Sorbian-ness. The place of Sorbian women has generally been approached in terms of women's ascribed status and assigned roles as bearers of tradition and guardians of the Sorbian *Volk*. The question is therefore to inquire how Sorbian women are installed in this determinist framework of gender and ethnicity by being symbolized as "*serbska mać*" (Sorbian mother). Taken together, these queries may point toward one of roads leading toward an understanding of the Sorbian community.

This chapter does not base on fieldwork data and original archival work, but rather provides an analysis of works published by the Sorbian academic community and other secondary sources which I will refer to when discussing theoretical ideas from anthropology, history and nation-building.

2.1 On the history of the Sorbs

2.1.1 Anthropologizing Sorbian History

The history of the Sorbs delineates how history and ethnicity are co-located. It is a checkered development of struggling with the threat of being assimilated by the Germans and the Sorbs' endeavors to preserve their Sorbian identity. History is used by the Sorbs as an important resource in their search for self-definition in which the relationship between the process of looking for the Self and history is also made clear. If we take an anthropological approach to the intersection of history and ethnicity, we not only pursue the question of "how the past has led to the present", but also "how history is used, experienced, remembered or created" (Chapman et al. 1989: 1).

As the discussion found in the introduction of *History and Ethnicity* (1989), edited by Britain social anthropologist Malcolm Chapman et al., illustrates, social anthropologists have been interested in posing the seldom asked question of "how did the present create the past?" rather than "how did the past create the present?" (1989: 5).

In the humanities and social sciences, historiography, comparative philology, and other fields, the tradition of tracing origins and looking to history to provide an explanation for the development of nations, ethnic groups and identities are well established (see 1989: 4f.). However, the objects of anthropological study have a way of reversing such a query into how ethnic groups construct their history "in order to account for the present, to justify it, understand it, or to criticize it, the past is used, selectively appropriated, remembered, forgotten, or invented" (1989: 5).

Chapman and his co-editors discuss the principal concern that anthropologists must tackle when they are dealing with history. Michael Herzfeld, however, points out that anthropologists explore history not only as an epistemological issue, but also as a methodological one (see 2001: 56f.). In Herzfeld's account:

> We cannot examine how various populations and interest groups use their images of the past to constitute or reinforce present interests unless we are prepared to include in our purview the question of how far anthropologists and other scholars have themselves become players in such process. (2001: 55)

Inferring from Herzfeld's stance, it is clear that he recapitulates that the object of discussion on history is the uses of the past by the present. For him, it is preposterous that we, as anthropologists, can somehow stand outside our object of study. It is also senseless to assume that a single historical narrative is sufficient to capture one people's past (ibid.). The act of pondering such epistemological themes, as Herzfeld puts it, is intrinsically "a reflexive exercise" (ibid.).

The methodological question of accuracy is also very central to an anthropological examination of history. The debate of how to perceive oppositional dualities of fact/fiction, history/myth, as Herzfeld suggests, is always at risk for getting involved in nominalism (2001: 55). Therefore, in his eyes, it is the "anthropologist's task to determine the criteria by which accuracy (or faithfulness to an ideal of representation) is attributed, and to use these to understand the ways in which the members of a society relate the past to the present" (2001: 57). However, questions of truth are mainly dependent on relations of power and are closely aligned with the relationship between the narrative of the authoritative discourse of the dominant group and the decoding of the powerful discourse by the subaltern one. Herzfeld thus takes this view further by propounding that "the other side of this task is to define the political context within which such assessments are made" (ibid.).

Concerning the interpretation of history, the dialectic between subjectivity and objectivity is conducive to understanding the concept of methodology mentioned above. In the analysis of the ethnicized past of *rußlanddeutsche Aussiedler* (Russia-German emigrants) in her *Die Macht des Ethnischen: Grenzfall Rußlanddeutsche. Perspektiven einer politischen Anthropologie*, Regina Römhild notes a few points that have particular relevance for this discussion (1998: 22ff.). Römhild departs from any methodological naivety and objectivity in the attempt to illustrate "one" history. Instead, she points the way toward many histories in terms of various attempts to reconstruct a historical reality in which each observer's viewpoint always conjoins with its structure, or what

the observer believes he or she recognizes[33](1998: 23). She shifts the focus away from narrating a "real" history and instead provides directions for delivering a "true interpretation" as much as possible, in the sense of one's own standpoint and objectives [34](ibid.). The idea of reconstructing the past shares much in common with the taking stock of history in ethnological studies and fieldwork research. The debate on history builds not on pure objectivity, but on the position from which a researcher approaches his or her research objects from their particular standpoint of understanding[35](ibid.). The question Römhild emphasizes is not whether historiography can be allowed to be subjective or not, but rather how and for what purpose this historiography utilizes the subjectivity which already exists[36](ibid.). Römhild's idea of the way researchers and those being studied associate with one another shares much in common with Herzfeld's description of the epistemological issue noted earlier: Through subjectivity and identification, the researcher becomes connected in a fundamental way with the researched whose history is being reconstructed and who acquires a special meaning. These two aspects have strong affiliations with the actual inquiry which it reconstructs and interprets[37](1998: 24).

In analyzing how to understand the history of the Sorbs, I locate myself in the anthropological conceptualization of history. I draw my fundamental assumptions mainly from the epistemological and methodological considerations of Herzfeld and Römhild. My point of departure for looking into Sorbian history, the reflection on how the present creates the past, disrupts the well-established, linear assimilation narratives that try to demonstrate how the past has led the Sorbs to become a minority group in Germany. This rethinking also entails a reconsideration of the positioning of researchers in their dealing with the history of a certain part of the population, or an ethnic group. My involvement in the interpretation of Sorbian history connotes that I reconstruct Sorbian history by taking an anthropological approach to understanding the Sorbs.

As various brochures and books on Sorbian historiography illustrate,[38] the history

[33] Cf. […] gibt es viele Geschichten im Sinne unterschiedlicher Versuche, historische Wirklichkeit zu rekonstruieren, in denen der jeweilige Standpunkt des Betrachters immer auch das mitstrukturiert, was er im Betrachten zu erkennen glaubt.

[34] Cf. Es kann nicht darum gehen, eine im absoluten Sinn "wahre" Geschichte zu erzählen, wohl aber darum, eine im Sinne des eigenen Standpunkts und der eigenen Zielsetzung möglichst „wahre Interpretation" zu liefern.

[35] Cf. Wie für die ethnologische (Feld)Forschung müsste auch für die Auseinandersetzung mit Geschichte gelten, dass sie ihre Aussagefähigkeit gerade nicht aus einer vermeintliche Objektivität, […] sondern vielmehr daraus, dass sie sich ihrem Gegendstand verstehend nähert und im Dienste dieses Verstehens Stellung beziehen muss.

[36] Cf. Die Frage ist also nicht, ob Geschichteschreibung überhaupt subjektiv sein darf, sondern wie und für was sie ihre immer schon existierende Subjektivität einsetzt.

[37] Cf. Über Subjektivität und Identifikation ist der Forscher mit dem Erforschten in elementarer Weise verknüpft: Wessen Geschichte rekonstruiert wird, welcher Sinn ihr unterlegt wird, hängt in enger Weise damit zusammen, wer sie rekonstruiert und deutet.

[38] Brochures: Sorbische Kulturinformation/Stiftung für das sorbische Volk (eds.). 2001. *Kleine Information zu den Sorben/Wenden in Deutschland*; Foundation for the Sorbian People/Cultural Information Center „Lodka" (eds.). 1997. *Customs and Traditions of the Sorbs in Lower Lusatia*; Stiftung für das sorbische Volk (ed.). 1997. *Die Sorben in Deutschland.* Books: Dieter Scholze (ed.). 1993. *Die Sorben in Deutschland.* Bautzen: Domowina; Peter Kunze. 2000 [1996]. *Die Sorben/Wenden in der Niederlausitz.* Bautzen: Domowina ; 2001 [1995]. *Kurze Geschichte der Sorben.* Bautzen: Domowina; Manfred Thieman (ed.). 1989. *Sorben. Serbja. Ein kleines Lexikon*. Bautzen: VEB Domowina; Wolf Oschlies. 1991. *Die Sorben. Slawisches Volk im Osten Deutschlands*. Bonn - Bad Godesberg: Friedrich-Elbert-Stiftung. Summarized history chronicled in books: Elka Tscherkoshewa (ed.). 1994. *So Langsam*

of the Sorbs always begins around 600 A.D., or even as early as between the 4th and the 6th century. The purpose of this is to attest that their Slavonic ancestors settled in the area between the rivers Elbe/Saale and Oder/Neiße. The next proof origin is the first historical record of the Sorbs from 631 A.D. in the Franconian chronicle of Fredgar, in which the Sorbs are mentioned as the "*Surbi*". In the 10th century, the subjugation of the German king, Henry the First (Heinrich I., 919~936), brought Christianization in its wake. During this period of time, the German military conquest and Christianization spelled doom for the Sorbs, who lost their political independence in 990 A.D.. The second wave of *deutsche Ostsiedlung* (German eastward emigration) from the 12th to the 14th century changed the population structure in the Sorbian area of settlement. Franconian, Flemish, Thuringian and Saxon peasants immigrated to the area. As a result of German expansion, the Sorbian language was banned in Bernburg/S., Altenburg, Zwickau, and Leipzig.

The Sorbian *Bautzener Bürgereid* (civic oath from Buatzen), which is the oldest known historical Sorbian document, originated around 1530. It proved that Lusatia has been the center of Sorbian history since the beginning of the 16th century, particularly in periods when assimilation and language prohibition obstructed the development of Sorbian culture (Kunze 2001 [1995]: 25). The translation of the "*Wendische Taufagende*" (Wendish Baptismal Liturgy) from 1543 is the oldest example of Sorbian religious literature. In 1548, Mikławš Jakubica translated the New Testament into the Sorbian language. In 1574, the first Sorbian book, a hymnbook by Albin Moller with the catechism in Lower Sorbian, appeared. The Thirty Years' War (1618~1648) decreased the number of Sorbs to almost half. The sizeable reduction of the Sorbian population during the war led to the diminishing of the Sorbian-speaking area. In the 18th century, Sorbian consciousness was evoked by several events, for instance, the foundation of the Wendish Preachers Society "*Sorabia*", among others. Under the influence of strong support from Slavonic neighbors, the Sorbian bourgeois nationalist consciousness has been growing since 1750. The following events powered the confirmation of Sorbian identity: Research of Sorbian language and culture; Jurij Mjeń's 1767 translation of Kloppstock's *Messias* into Sorbian (which signified the emergence of Sorbian secular literature), the circulation of a monthly journal for instruction and edification (1790), and other events.

The Sorbian area of settlement was reorganized as a consequence of the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The administrative splitting, Upper Lusatia was under the rule of Saxony and Lower Lusatia of Prussia, dragooned the Sorbs as a minority group in almost all districts of Lusatia. In Upper Lusatia, due to liberal political conditions, the Sorbs further developed and revived their culture, while the Prussian ruler restricted the Sorbian language by law in Lower Lusatia. Since the 1840s, the Sorbian intellectuals have been striving for the further development of Sorbian culture by undertaking various measures. Jan Arnošt Smoler[39] and Leopold Haupt published folksongs of the Wends of Upper Lusatia in 1841 and Lower Lusatia in 1843. In 1842, the Sorbian

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wird's Zeit. Kulturelle Perspektivesn der Sorben in Deutschland. Bonn: ARCult; Eckhard Paul/Jana Schulze. 1999. *Einblicke. Dohlady. Deutsch-obersorbisches Gesprächs- und Lesebüchlein*. Buatzen: Domowina.

[39] Jan Arnošt Smoler (1816~1884) was devoted to the Sorbian nationalist movement in the 19th century. For a biographical study on Smoler, see Kunze 1995.

newspaper *Tydženska Nowina* (Weekly Newspaper)[40] was published and distributed by Jan Arnošt Smoler and Handrij Zejler.[41] Other developments were the establishment of the scientific society *Maćica Serbska* (1847),[42] the foundation of Sorbian peasants' societies in Upper Lusatia demanding social and national rights (1848), and the demanding of equal rights by intelligentsia for Sorbian language and culture in school, church, and at court (1849).

Around 1875, the oppression of the Sorbs in *das Deutsche Reich* (the German Empire) led to intensified efforts to assert Sorbian culture. Two years later (1877), the national epic "Nawoženja" ("The Bridegroom") by Jacub Bart-Ćišinski marked the apex of classical Sorbian literature in the 19th century. In 1904, the Wendish House opened in Bautzen. In 1912, *Domowina*[43] was established as an umbrella organization for Sorbian associations and organizations. From 1919 to 1932, according to the Weimar constitution the Sorbs were allowed a more active cultural and political life, while on the other hand, the Weimar government germanized the Sorbs in school and church in a somewhat veiled way. The Sorbian popular movement was kept under surveillance by the "Wend Division" (Oschlies 1991: 24). After 1933, National Socialist dictatorship disrupted the lives of the Sorbs by banning the Sorbian language, *Domowina*, and all forms of public Sorbian life. Sorbian teachers and priests were banished from Lusatia, so that the Sorbs lost their leaders and preservers of language and culture. Hitler's dictatorship did not only aim to eliminate the Sorbs, but also to accelerate their assimilation (Toivanen 2001: 34). For example, academic research was done to assert that the Sorbs were German in terms of physical appearance, customs, dress and language (Oschiles 1991: 29). In the era of the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (German Democratic Republic, hereafter *DDR*), the Sorbian culture was ostensibly supported by the ruling *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany, hereafter *SED*), while in reality, all Sorbian activities and institutions were under its control. Maxist-Leninist state policy caused Sorbian culture to appear alienating and distanced to the Sorbs. In other words, the Sorbian relationship to the *DDR* is ambivalent in that it was the *DDR* regime which institutionalized Sorbian organizations but also held state control over the Sorbs (Toivanen 2001: 35). The energy policies of the ruling party had a very negative influence on Sorbian culture and language, as Lusatia was developed for its opencast mines of brown coal. The Sorbs claim that these opencast mines have also "dredged" Sorbian culture. The reunification of Germany was seen as a new beginning by the Sorbs. Internally, the Sorbs have reformed and are reorganizing Sorbian institutions such as *Domowina*. The Sorbs are trying to build up international relationships with their Slavonic neighbors, and they actively participate in domestic and international organizations for minority affairs, such as the German-based *Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker* (Society of Threatened Peoples, Göttingen), the Federal Union of European Nationalities (hereafter FUEN, in Flensburg), and the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (Dublin & Brussels). However, the high rate of unemployment and emigration to Western Germany, which

[40] See Kunze 1995: 83-95.
[41] Handrij Zejler (1804~1875) was a priest and a founder of Sorbian national literature. For a brief biography, see Thieman 1989: 162-164.
[42] See Kunze 1995: 95-104.
[43] The etymological root of *Domowina* in the Sorbian language is *dom*, meaning "home" or "house".

concerns not only the Sorbs, but also the whole of Eastern Germany, has been detrimental to the development of the Sorbs.

As the above sketch of Sorbian history shows, the Sorbs have since long tussled for the preservation of their culture, language, and identity against the conquest and assimilation by the Germans. The path of such historiography marks a cycle of oppression by the Germans and the revolt of the Sorbs. In this cyclic process, Sorbian identity has ensued by dint of the development of the Sorbian written language, the publication of books, the founding of societies, the circulation of newspapers, the progress of literature, music, theater, etc.. At the same time, this undertaking marks the crystallization of the emergence of an imagined Sorbian community: A sense of belonging is evoked. This summarized history also demonstrates how the Sorbs have struggled under oppression by Germans and survived despite this. Taking up the cudgels for the preservation of the Sorbian culture constitutes the main arena for building Sorbian identity (Toivanen 2001: 69).

In this context, the major subject of this historical process is collectivity: The Sorbs as a unified whole. This history is not only an ethnic history, but also a minority one, which the Sorbs utilize in order to distinguish themselves form the dominant Other, the Germans (2001: 68). By writing a history of their own, the Sorbs claim the position of a speaking subject, making themselves visible, seeking an escape route out of the mechanism with which German, as a nation state, monopolizes the history of subjugated people in a structure of cultural power. Römhild's analysis of the history of the confrontation between Russia-German emigrants and the Russian nation-state will provide a breeding ground for my discussion here. In Römhild's account:

> Ethnic identity, i.e. the consciousness of collective existence as a distinct group, from this point of view, becomes the central issue and pivot of written history. As the identity of a minority, it is always an identity threatened with potentially disappearing. The question of to what extent a minority was able to assert itself in its foreign/ethnic environment and its varying degrees of interest in monopolizing and leveling out will therefore become the structural central question of historical representation.[44](1998: 25)

Retaining Sorbian culture and identity as the core of Sorbian historiography is considered to be an important identity resource for the Sorbs (Toivanen 2001: 29f.). However, as mentioned above, these historical events are officially defined and selected. By means of a systematical passing-on of their history, e.g. historical education, symbolism of national objects such as flags, and spatial "monumentalization" (Herzfeld 2001: 78f.), these chosen historical happenings then form part of "the system of conscious history into which men incorporate, in one way or another, what they consider important about their society" (Hobsbawm 1997: 11). In this selection process, "remembering" and "forgetting" are in a *pas de deux*. Instead of concentrating on formal sources of historical knowledge, as Herzfeld says, anthropologists have shifted

[44] Cf. Ethnische Identität, d.h. das Bewusstsein einer kollektiven Existenz als distinkte Gruppe, wird aus dieser Perspektive zum Dreh- und Angelpunkt der zu schreibenden Geschichte. Als Identität einer Minderheit ist sie immer eine von potentiellem Verschwinden bedrohte Identität. Die Frage, inwieweit sie sich gegen ungleich stärkeren Vereinahmungs- und Nivellierungsinteressen der fremd- ethnischen Umwelt behaupten konnte, wird damit zur strukturierenden Kernfrage der historischen Darstellung.

their focus to "memory" and "forgetting" as the source of history (2001: 78). How are "memory" and "forgetting" employed in the process of constructing Sorbian identity so that history can be remembered or forgotten as "their own"? (Anderson 1996: 206). Does history then become a significant pedestal that underpins their otherwise threatened, potentially disappearing Sorbian identity?

Drawing inspiration from Anderson's point of view (1996), I am suggesting that the aforementioned historical events, which appear in chronological, summarized histories of the Sorbs either in the beginning or end of books, could be the answer to the above question. Chronological representation of history could be understood as a biography of the Sorbs. In Anderson's view, the biographies of nations emerge from the interaction between commemoration and oblivion because "all profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias" (1996: 204). Anderson also stresses that "out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives" (ibid.). Anderson cites the following example: It is inconceivable that we "remember" the consciousness of our childhood after we have experienced the physiological and psychological changes produced by puberty. For instance, we have to ask someone else to identify the naked baby in the yellowed photograph as us. The photograph "simultaneously records a certain apparent continuity and emphasizes its loss from memory" (ibid.). Anderson says that "out of this estrangement comes a conception of personhood, *identity* which, because it can not be 'remembered', must be narrated" (ibid., emphasis Anderson's). The frame for national narratives is historical. A national biography has no originator and can therefore not be written "down time", although the way of describing history in it is "a long procreative chain of begettings" (ibid.). However, paradoxically, this is the essence of fashioning the biography of a nation:

> […] the only alternative to fashion it "up time" – towards Peking Man, Java Man, King Arthur, wherever the lamp of archeology casts its fitful gleam. This fashioning, however, is marked by deaths, which, in a curious inversion of conventional genealogy, start from an originary present, World War II begets World War I; out of Sedan comes Austerlitz; the ancestor of the Warsaw Upspring is the state of Israel. (Anderson 1996: 205)

These origins, which are found by molding the biography of the Sorbs "up time", legitimate the past (Herzfeld 2001: 70f.). The image of origins as a source for building a unified Sorbian identity is a central one: By tracing their Slavonic origin, the Sorbs therefore distinguish themselves from Germans. Returning to distant origins also adopts the genealogical principle of "telescoping" or "structural amnesia" that bring about sanctioned silences in order to subdue, or completely suppress, the derivation of internal difference. The existence of this difference, caused by embarrassing historical interventions and invasions by "foreign" peoples, erodes a "venerable history" that glorifies nationalist historiography. However, for the Sorbs, the situation is quite the reverse. They have never had a glorious history, marked by a victory over Germans, to celebrate (Toivanen 2001: 68). What they have is a fate inextricably linked with conquest and assimilation by the Germans. Therefore, the Sorbs have acknowledged the invasion of Germans as justification for hegemony cohering each Sorb into a

community of fate. On this Sorbian identity is based (ibid.). [45]

2.1.2 The Sorbs as a *Volk*

In my reading of Sorbian history, two elements take center stage: *lud*[46] /*Volk* (a people) and *dominzna*/*Heimat* (home/homeland). As I have repeatedly mentioned, the idea of "being assimilated" is a keynote of Sorbian discourse. It is especially evident in the representation of the history of the Sorbs as illustrated in the preceding. Articulating a need to be a *Volk* has been considered to be a counterforce against the pressure applied by assimilation and conquest. The dwindling of the population of the Sorbs is on a par with the crystallization of a *Volk*. From the viewpoint of the Sorbs, the shrinking of Sorbian lands not only suggests a decline of their living space, but also signifies a debilitation of their culture, language and tradition.

It is worth noting that, in brochures and books on the Sorbs, the Sorbs usually describe themselves as a small *Volk*, which is German for "a people", in Europe. "The Sorbian *Volk*/people", "a small *Volk*/people", "the smallest *Volk*/of peoples in Europe", "a Slavic *Volk*/people" are key words of self-description in the Sorbian discourse. Besides its quantitative implication, the idea of *Assoziertheit* (association) with Germans delineates the historical features of the formation of the national character of the Sorbs. As the history of the Sorbs shows, the Sorbs have not established an independent social and material culture; they do not possess governmental, social economic and political institutions of their own. As German scholar of Slavonic languages Walter Koschmal says, this shows that the Sorbs have been "accommodated" into the "German shelter culture" (*deutsche Herbergkultur*) (1995: 21). In his *Sorbische Kultur und ihre Rezipienten* (Sorbian Culture and Its Audiences) from 1992, Sorbian researcher in cultural scholarship Ludwig Elle places emphasis on such incompletion as one of the essential features of Sorbian culture. Under these circumstances, the ethno-cultural specifics of small peoples should be underlined, so that the socio-cultural structure and the development of their existence can be modified (Elle 1992: 9). Due to the insufficient structural entirety, group members always live bi-culturally and most of them are bilingual. For Elle, this means that the intellectual and cultural life of the disadvantaged ethnic group functions on the basis of two national cultures and two languages (1992: 10). In addition, in my reading of his analysis, the affiliation with German provides added weight in order to legitimate his stance that, on the grounds of assimilation, the Sorbs are thus unable to preserve their culture and way of life.

Sorbian national consciousness started forming in the second half of the 18th century.[47] The development of Sorbian national consciousness was predicated on the social-political environment at that time and on the effect of the large-scale intellectual and cultural movement in which Johann Gottfried Herder (1744~1803) played a central role (Šołta 1990: 112). In his concept of democracy and social and national

[45] Tschernokoshewa emphasizes that she takes the same view in this regard (Talk with Tschernokoshewa, April 4, 2007, in Bautzen).
[46] In Susanne Hose's view, it is important to mark *Volk* and *Heimat* in the Sorbian language, *lud* and *dominzna*, because this evokes the emotional feeling which the Sorbian mother tongue carries for the Sorbian people. Moreover, she places emphasizes that the Sorbs intend to be a *lud*, rather than an ethnic minority (Talk with Hose, April 11, 2007, in Bautzen).
[47] See the sketch of Sorbian history in the previous section.

emancipation, Herder stood for a friendly relationship between Germans and Slavs. The influence of Herder and German Romanticism gave shape to the idea of a Sorbian *Volk*.

The notion of *Volk* has a specific connotation in German-speaking Europe since the German Humanism of the 18th and 19th century. In her comprehensive discussion on *Kultur und Alltag* (Culture and Everyday Life) from 1978, Ina-Maria Greverus locates *Volk* as a concept loaded with national value (*nationaler Wertbegriff*) (1978: 160 f.). For German Humanists, *De Origine et situ Germanorm* or the *Germania* of Publius Cornelius Tacitus (55~116 A.D.), in which a foreigner established old German virtues, the following was true:

> [This] was a revelation and stimulus in their search for 'proof'. Such proof was mostly sought in the linguistic traditions of the 'Volk' […] The humanist attention to the folk foreshadows the later creed of romantic nationalism which regarded Volk as an organism, a grown community, something originally and culturally connected, which had been separated only through the development of an estate society and its passing into a society made up of social classes and which had to be recovered in the nation state. (Greverus 1978: 160)[48]

In the era of German romantic nationalism, the concept of *Volk* gained a foothold in "locating authenticity" (Bendix 1997: 27f.). Herder, the great philosopher, theologian, and poet, was a great advocate of this. He accorded native language, poetry, folk songs and other forms of expressive culture prominence in the crystallization of authenticity. In Herder's view, folk poetry is the genuine locus of "folkness" (Bendix 1997: 35). The *Volk* are also the bearers of poetic expression. Herder specified *Volk* in various ways, mostly as a nation, people, or tribe (Bendix 1997: 41; Bauman & Briggs 2003: 183). According to the Herderian concept, the essential members of a *Volk* are the peasants, artisans, and the bourgeoisie [*das Volk der Bürger*] (*Sämtliche Werke* 1: 392; 6: 104; 7: 265; 32: 60, quoted in Bauman & Briggs 2003). The autocratic, cosmopolitan, French-speaking nobility are excluded from Herder's definition of *Volk*; as is the rabble, who apparently do not sing or rhyme.

This detachment of certain social classes addresses Herder's central concerns inherent in the preservation and the fostering of the German language (with the counter-example of an aristocracy who speaks French) and in authentic poetic tradition and creation. Purity, authenticity, and homogeneity formulate the contours of Herder's political community: One people, one fatherland, one language (*Sämtliche Werke* 18: 347, quoted in Bauman & Briggs 2003: 193). The organic elements of *Volk*/people, history, tradition, language and poetry are the indispensable constituents for Herder's idea of political culture.

Herder's language ideology gives voice to his political discourse, in which poetic tradition and its constituent expressive forms indicating the national spirit portray the authoritative foundation for the cultural cohesion that is important to the settlement and the retention of a viable polity. For him, a viable polity is characterized by one national language as opposed to the penetration of foreign tongues (Bauman & Briggs 2003: 193).

[48] English translation is by Regina Bendix 1997: 172.

To German intellectuals in the era of Romanticism, language was the key to exploring an authenticity formed by the intertwining of nationalism and folklore (Bendix 1997: 49). The origin and development of language are centrally linked to human existence and history. As Jacob Grimm (1785~1862) tells us, "man is not only called thus because he thinks, but is also man because he thinks, and he speaks, designates and guarantees to us the reason and origin of his language" (Grimm 1984 [1851]: 12, quoted in Bauman & Briggs 2003: 199).

The Brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (1786~1859) embrace Herder's nationalist project in which language and folklore (especially poetic performance) represent cultural identity. The Grimm brothers provided new scientific methodology in the process of searching for authenticity. They chose folktales as the literary materials to document an authentic past that strengthened the culture of the present (Bendix 1997: 50). In their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, "fidelity", "purity", "authenticity" were guiding principles of their vernacular transmission, i.e. they did not embellish, change, or add to the collected tales. Their study of language equipped them with a better understanding for the reconstruction of a genuine German past. Thus, the Grimm brothers created and constructed a German nation "by mapping a range of genres, dialects, customs, rituals, and beliefs and demonstrating scientifically that they formed a unified, dynamic system […] the image of a German nation that is equally complex, unified and organic – that is, living" (Bauman & Briggs 2003: 220). In this process, the Brothers Grimm coaxed the naturalization of the nation into a recognizable form.

The ideas of Herder and the Brothers Grimm provided a breeding ground for the Sorbian nationalist movement. The elaboration on the Romantic conceptions of language and polity also offered a basis for the Sorbs to undertake various attempts to awaken and evoke national consciousness among their peers. The hidden logic behind these undertakings is "in search of authenticity" (Bendix 1997). As the anthropologist Regina Bendix, who is a Swiss native who attended American Folklore programs, has taught in the US and is now Professor of *Volkskunde* at University of Göttingen, has brilliantly formulated it,

> The most powerful modern political movement, nationalism, builds on the essentialist notions inherent in authenticity, and folklore in the guise of native cultural discovery and rediscovery has continually served nationalist movements since the Romantic era (1997: 7).

The nationalist project, in Bendix's account, is the most powerful and lasting example of the encompassment of the jargon of authenticity and folkloristic vocabulary in so far as that "texualized expressive culture such as songs and tales can, with the aid of rhetoric of authenticity, be transformed from an experience of individual transcendence to a symbol of the inevitability of national unity" (1997: 20f.). And exactly these nationalist performances are what generate the Sorbian community.

In my view, the Sorbian conception of *Volk* has deviated from the original idea that was based on particular social groups specified by Herder, the Grimm brothers, and their contemporaries. In the Sorbian discourse, many terms, such as culture, ethnic group, *Volk*, nation, state and individual, are homogenized into a congruent unity without differentiation (Tschernokoshewa 2000: 66). National totality becomes

singularized, meaning all Sorbs are seen as belonging to the whole "oneness" of the Sorbian people, or *Volk*. The Sorbian "imagined community" was fashioned through the foregoing nationalist doings. The startling genius of Anderson's account of the forming of an imagined community via printed language is therefore conducive to my discussion here.

The leaders of the Sorbian nationalist movement are theologians, priests, writers, poets, and Sorabists (academics in Sorbian Studies on philology and literary studies). These people are professionals who specialize in dealing with language. Before the beginning of nationalist consciousness among bourgeois Sorbs after 1750, the first printed book in the Lower Sorbian language in 1574 foreshadowed the advent of an imagined Sorbian community. Thereafter, the creation of the Sorbian epic went hand in hand with the significant influence of the study of the Sorbian language, the publication of a grammar of Sorbian, the circulation of Sorbian newspapers and journals, and the collection of folksongs, folktales and proverbs. All of these led to the standardization of the Sorbian language in print, and the use of written language was crucial to the formation of a Sorbian national consciousness.

Anderson indicates three points that explain why printed language has laid the foundation for national consciousness (1983: 47f.) and also applies this to the case of the Sorbs. First, printed language created unified fields of exchange, and communication enabled those who spoke different dialects to comprehend one another. Secondly, print capitalism bestowed a new fixity on the language, which, over a long period of time, helped to cultivate the image of antiquity that was so central to the subjective idea of the nation. Thirdly, printed capitalism created a language of power that was different from the administrative vernaculars. Anderson's approach is useful here for exploring how the energetic activities of the Sorbian priests, writers, poets, grammarians, philologists and lexicographers contributed to the rise of Sorbian national consciousness, which was carried by the tidal wave of Enlightenment in the 18th century, flourished in the middle of 19th century under the strong influence of Slavonic Romanticism, and was later characterized as the "national rebirth" of the Sorbs. Anderson's perspective provides a frame of reference for explaining why and how a unified printed language has underpinned the Sorbian consciousness in this study. However, it must be noted that the Sorbs have not formed a unified written and spoken language like most other peoples; rather Sorbian is composed of two varieties that originated from two different nuclear districts: the variant of Upper Sorbian in Upper Lusatia, founded on the dialect of the area around Bautzen, and Lower Sorbian in Lower Lusatia, based on the dialect spoken in the area around Cottbus (Jenč 1993: 102). However, this internal difference is transformed into "one" language when outside the Sorbian community, especially when confronting the dominant Other (German), but also when dealing with the other Slavonic neighbors. As Sorbian linguist Rudolf Jenč says, "in linguistics, there are two Sorbian languages. But in comparison with the other Slavonic languages, they form a unity. Therefore, we are authorized to briefly speak only of Sorbian and a Sorbian language"[49](1966: 159, quoted in Urban 1980: 55).

In spite of this internal difference, the Sorbian language has played a role of

[49] Cf. In der Sprachwissenschaft spricht man von zwei sorbischen Sprachen. Beide aber bilden gegenüber den anderen slawischen Sprachen eine Einheit, und deshalb sind wir berechtigt, hier kurz nur von Sorbischen und der sorbischen Sprache zu sprechen.

unprecedented importance in the formation of an imagined Sorbian community. Fields of communication took shape through the forenamed nationalist undertakings, the message of which was transmitted by the Sorbian language in print form. The products of Sorbian priests, littérateurs, grammarians, etc. functioned as media that conveyed abstract, centralized, and standardized nationalist ideas into spheres of communication (Gellner 1983: 127). As a result, the people's love of the Sorbian language was evoked,[50] a sense of belonging to the Sorbs was awakened, and people therefore felt that their membership in the Sorbian community was natural.

2.1.3 Staking off Lusatia as the Sorbian *Heimat*

The love for and the "natural" connection to a political community can be deciphered through the many ways in which language describes this object: In the vocabulary of kinship (motherland, or fatherland/*Vaterland*), or that of home (*Heimat*) (Anderson 1983: 31). Both idioms denote something to which one is naturally tied. As the case of the Sorbs shows, *Heimat*, meaning Lusatia, is an important factor for identity. Sorbs have always claimed that they have not had a motherland, in contrast to their Slavonic neighbors (e.g. the Czech Republic, Poland). Therefore Lusatia is the only *Heimat* of the Sorbs. In the discourse of Sorbian-ness, Lusatia is constructed as the homeland of the Sorbs, and it is also employed as one of the national strategies for their identity construction. In the historical writings of the Sorbs, their connection to Lusatia is accompanied by the history of being assimilated and is also a result of their claimed space being culturally delimited as Sorbian Lusatia.

As the history of the Sorbs shows, the Sorbs are the remains of a Slavonic people who occupied and settled along the Elbe as far as the River Saale in the west and the River Oder and Neiße in the east in the 6th century (Kunze 1993: 8f.; 2001: 9f., *Stiftung für das sorbische Volk* 1997: 6). Because of the *Völkerwanderung* (the movement of peoples/migration), the ancestor of the Sorbs, which were various Slavic tribes, settled in this region. They were called *Elbslawen* (the Elbe Slavs). The Roman historians Gaius Plinius, Julius Cornelius Tacitus, and Ptolomaeus Claudius described those unknown, west Slavic tribes under the generic term "Venedi", "Venethis", "Finidae". These various collective terms were transformed into today's *Wenden* (Wends) (Thieman 1989: 156f.). After the process of disbandment, and conquest and assimilation by Germans, eventually only the Sorbian tribes of the *Milzener* (around Bautzen) and *Lusizer* (around Cottbus) survived. Today's *Lausitz*/*Łužica*/*Łužyca* (Lusatia) originates from the name of the tribe *Lusizer* (Thieman 1989: 157; Šołta 1990: 146). Through the vicissitudes of Sorbian history, Lusatia has been staked off as "Sorbian Lusatia", and it was fully launched by the actions and activities promoting "Sorbian" values that have occurred since the civic national consciousness of the Sorbs burgeoned after 1750.

Introductory brochures or books about the Sorbs always say something to the tune of "the Sorbs have lived in Lusatia around 1500 years" (*Stiftung für das sorbische Volk* 1997:5), "the homeland of the Sorbs is Lusatia" (Urban 1980: 9), or, as the title of the

[50] For instance, Jan Arnošt Smoler and his colleague who established the Sorbian newspaper *Tydźenska Nowina* (Weekly Newspaper) believed that a newspaper in the Sorbian language could stir a love of their language in the whole *Volk* (Kunze 1995: 83).

Sorbian national anthem tells, *An die Sorbische Lausitz* (To Sorbian Lusatia) (1840). As these examples illustrate, for the Sorbs, ideas of a culturally and ethnically distinctive place are reified in Lusatia. Furthermore, Lusatia has also become the naturalized national representation for the Sorbs since they started living on this land more than one thousand years ago.

In this sense, Lusatia, which is located between Bautzen and Lübbenau and extends from today's eastern Saxony and lower Schlesia to southeastern Brandenburg, is claimed as the homeland of the Sorbs: It is where they "feel at home". But notably, notwithstanding that Lusatia is singularized as the native land of the Sorbs, this area is pluralized in its division into Upper Lusatia and Lower Lusatia. These two sub-areas have had their own historical development (Kunze 2000, 2001), as the result of the Congress of Vienna 1815 was to partition Lusatia. Upper Lusatia was administered by Saxony; Lower Lusatia was ruled by Prussia. The fragmentation of Lusatia was believed to be the cause of blocking unified development of Sorb-ness (Toivanen 2001: 50) because the ruling lords had different attitudes toward and employed different policies on the Sorbs. As Sorbian historian Peter Kunze reports (2001: 41f.), the territorial splitting-up encumbered Sorbian unity in terms of economic development and growth of trade; the splintering of Sorbian territory hampered the maintenance and fostering of their language and culture as a group. The expansion of Sorbian literature and the exchange of Sorbian intellectuals across state borders were also hindered. All of the difficulties caused by breaking up Lusatia beset and interrupted the process of building a Sorbian nation. Furthermore, the possibility for the development of educated and middle-class Sorbian intellectuals varied from Saxony to Prussia, as did school legislation and employment of Sorbian language in public.

Till the present day, Lusatia has still not formed an administrative unity. Upper Lusatia belongs to the German federal state of Saxony, and Lower Lusatia lies in the federal state of Brandenburg. In 1990, the Sorbian public demanded to be administered by one federal state, Saxony. Based on the signatory document of the Conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (hereafter OSCE) and according to the main principles of the rights of European nationalities approved by FUEN, the Sorbs claimed that they have a right to their own unified homeland (Toivanen 2001: 50). The Sorbian elites believed that the Sorbian *Volk* only has a historic chance in a unified territory (Toivanen 2001: 51). It is also generally held to be true that the separation of territorial administration harms Sorbian culture because the Sorbian people cannot be seen as a unity (ibid.). This implies "no unified territory, no unified *Volk*".

Besides territorial fragmentation, the opencast mines for brown coal in Lusatia have always taken center stage in the Sorbian discourse. During 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, in the era of early industrialization, Lusatia was developed for brown coal mines on the grounds of its good geological and hydrological conditions. After the establishment of *das Deutsche Reich* in 1871, the mines were upgraded to large-scale industry. At the beginning of the 20th century, an extensive mechanization of mining production was introduced. As Sorbian historian Frank Förster says in his historical and sociological study of opencast mines in Lusatia, industrialization had the following effects on the social structure of affected areas: 1) Local inhabitants changed their original main occupation from farmers to miners. Farming thus became their second job. 2) More and more German-speaking workers moved to the coal fields (1995: 12f.). This turned the

Sorbian miners into a minority. Owing to the energy politics of the party in power in the *DDR*, the *SED*, Lusatia was made the center of mining and energy. Lusatia's output was 310 million tons of coal per year. Of this, two-thirds were from the district around Cottbus (Toivanen 2001: 51). According to Förster, the opencast mining of brown coal in Lusatia triggered the enforced eviction of a total of 14,466 residents from 77 villages in the period from 1924 to 1993 (1995: 18). Especially from 1945 to 1989, under the regime of the *DDR*, 13,453 inhabitants were forced to leave 71 villages (ibid.). More significantly, during the period from 1974 to 1989, 49 villages (= 69% of the 77 villages) were demolished for mining, and the result was that 8,215 dwellers (= 61% of the 13,453 residents) had to resettle (ibid.). Furthermore, another 11,015 villagers from 47 towns also had to resettle because the towns were partially destroyed; particularly the socialist energy policy forced 8,843 of 11,015 inhabitants to depart from their homes (1995: 19). In sum, the total number of people who had to resettle amounted to 25,481 people from 1924 to 1989, of which 22,296 (= 88%) were forced to relocate from 1945 to 1989 (ibid.). For the *DDR* government, these enforced relocations were classified simply as *Ortsverlegungen* (place changes) or *Ortsverlagerungen* (moves) and *Teilortsverlegungen* (partial changes of place) or *Teilortsverlagerungen* (partial moves). However, as Förster criticizes, such official euphemisms suggest that these villages were only places. For the village residents, both Germans and Sorbs, the devastation caused by the opencast mines not only demolished the ecological environment of Lusatia, but it also destroyed their homeland.

For the Sorbs, such ruin has threatened to destruct their "national substance". They particularly see the loss of their culture, tradition and language as having happening when German-speaking workers came and when the Sorbian villagers were ousted and resettled. Seen in this light, the "*Abbagerung sorbischer Kultur*" (dredging of Sorbian culture) (Ratajczak 2004: 14,19) remains a powerful metaphor for the dismantling of Sorbian identity. Cordula Ratajczak (2004) has carefully explored how the opencast brown coal mines have exercised influence on the process of identity construction. This is exemplified by the German and Sorbian-mixed district of Mühlrose/Miłoraz (250 inhabitants) in the community of Schleife on the Lusatian Heath. Traditionally, Mühlrose is a Sorbian-identified village. In comparison with the other villages, Trebensdorf, Schleife, Rohne, Mulkwitz, Halbendorf and Groß Düben, the problems caused by the mining became especially aggravated in here (Ratajczak 2004: 14). Some village property borders directly on the opencast mines, the streets of the village end in the hole that has been already mined, and there is an area where one-third of the village did not exist before the mining started (ibid.). In 1990, the Sorbian umbrella organization *Domowina* thus put forward a motion to the former *DDR* government to declare the concerned villages "ethnic-cultural reserves" (ibid.).

However, because Ratajczak discerns the problematic nature as pertaining to the identity construction in those mine areas, the analysis of cultural identity from the perspective of cultural scholarship is distanced from any essentialist views, and it rejects the binary oppositional relationship between German society and Sorbian ethnic group. Moreover, the dilemma between the homeland and mines occupies peoples' lives in the area. To be more precise, the ambivalence resulting from the destruction of one's space for living and economic basis of one's livelihood leaves a long and convoluted trail in this district (Ratajczak 2004: 14).

It follows that the Sorbs perceive Lusatia as their homeland, which should serve as

> an immediate, subjective life world experienced every day, which, through longer settlement in its social, cultural and natural components offers intimacy and safety, emotional security and satisfactory social relations, and therefore satisfies different (basic) needs.[51](Neumeyer 1992: 127, quoted in Huber 1999: 49)

Lusatia, an originally Sorbian, socio-cultural, structured space, so to speak, is a space occupied by Sorbian values of orientation, which gives this space the characteristic of a *Lebensraum* (space for living) (see Greverus 1972: 53). In an unaffected "life performance", Lusatia would mean a world of unquestionable fact, i.e. a *Lebenswelt* (life world) (ibid.). As Ina-Maria Greverus emphasizes, when this life world confronts other life worlds in space, the geographic space as the boundary of the life world functions as a value, and the identification of one's own life world with a certain space takes place (1972: 53). The Sorbs, particularly those who reside in the mining areas, began to identify their life world with the geographic space of Lusatia until the German-speaking workers moved into "their" territory, which is defined as "an environment, in which one apperceives one's own world as the orientation of value in the space surrounded by the life world"[52](ibid.). Such a process entails a quality understood as a "uniqueness" or "exclusiveness" that only the Sorbs have.

It can therefore be asserted that Lusatia is a "space of identity" (Greverus 1972: 53) for the Sorbs. This is a subjective experience and perception, and it is only accessible through the filter of one's culturally specific life world (ibid.). One particular human life world is defined as *der territoriale Mensch* (territorial human), who finds his/her identity in territory (Greverus 1972: 54). In Greverus' estimation, one defines one's identity through territory, and, vice versa, territory is an identity factor. The concept of territory revolves around the idea of territory as a space of behaviors, possession, and defense, and one's need for safety is inherent in that territory (1972: 23).

To conclude this section on the history of the Sorbs with Herzfeld, history is ostensibly a celebration of time that often serves instead suppresses its own specificity (2001: 59). In an ethnic history, in which ethnic identity takes center stage, people use history to "buttress their identity against the corrosive flow of time" (ibid.). Therefore, as the history of the Sorbs has demonstrated, it is as if the Sorbs and their culture have never changed in the flux and reflux of time's river. Such historical presentation also subdues or ignores "history from below". In this sense, the ordinary Sorbian people have a difficult relationship with the history of people's everyday lives. As the committee in charge of the report *So langsam wird's Zeit. Kulturelle Perspectiven der Sorben in Deutschland* (It's About Time. Cultural Perspectives of the Sorbs in Germany) (1994) asserts, Sorbian intellectuals and those who dedicate themselves to the development and preservation of Sorbian-ness very often present Sorbian history in a

[51] Cf. Eine unmittelbare, alltäglich erfahrene und subjektive Lebenswelt, die durch längeres Einleben in ihre sozialen, kulturellen und natürlichen Bestandteile Vertrautheit und Sicherheit, emotionale Geborgenheit und befriedigende soziale Beziehungen bietet und – auch dadurch – insbesondere verschiedene (Grund-) Bedürfnisse befriedigt.

[52] Cf. Umwelt apperzipiert man der Eigenwelt als Wertorientierung in dem die Lebenswelt umschließenden Raum.

patriotic and idealized way (1994: 91). Therefore, there is a formidable barrier that common Sorbian people feel is difficult to cross.

Moreover, the history of weaker nations and groups tends to homogenize internal difference in order to craft a unified outward image. This homogenization engenders a defensive essentialism on which they ground their identity (Herzfeld 2001: 68). Hence, it is not surprising that the main subject in my study, Sorbian women, does not appear in the "greater" Sorbian history. This is also the case for the process of building a Sorbian identity. Does this mean they do not exist in history? No. Women are excluded in public arenas, but are assigned to private spheres. Women are usually hidden in various nationalist projects, but they are ascribed to certain assignments in the name of the *Volk*. As Herder's construct of *Volk* suggests, if the women "is to develop herself into what *she is meant to be*, so that she may enhance her soul and be the delight of the male species, so that she may grow to attain the dignity of the burgher's estate, of motherhood, of a spouse, and of an educator," her "education must not reflect the male view or, still less, the scholarly view." Rather, it "must accommodate her mind," "her sphere," that is, "the good common sense of life […] the common sense of the house and kitchen" (*Sämtliche Werke* 1: 393f.; Herder 1992: 201f., quoted in Bauman & Briggs 2003: 185) It is no wonder that the German writer Ilse Frapan (1849~1908) says, "as a woman I have no nation" (Asche 1996: 9).

In nationalist schemes, womanhood is associated with collective territory. Gender difference imbued with binarism thus ensues: Motherland is a passive, receptive and vulnerable image, while Fatherland presents an active image because men found the nation, and men defend, secure and avenge it (Katschnig-Fasch 2005: 6). This decipherment of the denotation which the gendered vocabularies carry unfolds the connection between womanhood and national collectivity. This will be further explored in next sections of this chapter.

Finally, anthropologizing the national history of the Sorbs will make Sorbian people and their everyday lives more visible. It is this "triviality" of people's practices and experiences in everyday life that helps us to understand the women interviewed from a pluralizing point of view of *histories* (see Herzfeld 2001: 72, my emphasis).

2.2 The Sorbian Language

2.2.1 The Emergence of the Written Sorbian Language

"We speak a language, so we are a people"[53](Toivanen 2001: 129). According to her empirical research in a comparative study of the Sorbs in Germany and the Sami in Finnland, Toivanen titles one of her subsections with this expression and elaborates on language, which serves as one of the affirmative elements in nation-building. Following Núñez Seixas (1993), Toivanen describes how affirmative constituents such as "race", language, traditions, mentality and structural or economic elements function as the components of the institutionalization of "we-concepts" in the national sense (2001: 122f.). Among the factors listed language is considered to be one of the most prominent features for nearly all Sorbs, even more than the very essential quality of ethnicity and

[53] Cf. Wir sprechen eine Sprache, also sind wir ein Volk.

identity. In this sense, as quoted above, language performs the most crucial part of constructing a nation or an ethnic group.

As repeatedly noted, language has played and continues to play an extraordinary role in the Sorbian discourse. The exceptional significance given to language in the process of nation-building also fully reverberates in modern nationalism. But let me now return to the central thesis of this study which I take up in the first section of chapter one: following Barth's line of thought, "objective" distinctions such as language, dress, and customs do not form ethnic identity, but rather self-ascription and attribution by others does (1969a). Ethnicity is a strategy of organizing social interaction in and between groups rather than from the result of cultural difference. But why are the overt signals primarily exemplified by language widely recognized as one of the "natural" fundamentals of ethnicity and ethnic identity?

Another counter-argument against taking the criteria of shared language for granted in defining nation or nationhood is Hobsbawm's analysis in his 1990 *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. By listing some important works on nations and nationalism published in the period 1968~88, Hobsbawm pinpoints the leading question in most of those works: What is a (or the) nation? (1990: 4f.) In his account, the classifying of groups of human beings in terms of nations is in some ways primary and fundamental for social existence or for individual identification. Nevertheless, paradoxically, no satisfactory criterion can be found for determining which of the many human collectivities ought to be marked in this way (1990: 5). Single factors such as language or ethnicity, or a mixture of various criteria such as language, common territory, a shared history, and cultural traits, are established objective criteria for nationhood. Based on these factors, people attempt to clarify the reasons why certain human groups have become "nations" and others not (ibid.). Hobsbawm decodes such endeavors as failures in that nations are "historically novel, emerging, changing and, even today, far from universal entities" (1990: 6). He further emphasizes that the above mentioned criteria – language, ethnicity and the like – are themselves "fuzzy, shifting and ambiguous" (ibid.). Exactly because of their elusiveness and vagueness, the aforesaid objective definitions are very easily utilized and naturalized as primordial elements by propagandists and are therefore programmaticly used (see ibid.) to evoke people's sense of belonging in the given collectivity and then to complete the establishment of a nation or reach other political ends. For Hobsbawm, the purportedly objective criteria employed in the nationalist projects are vulnerable to objections since they do not bear up to scrutiny from social sciences (see 1990: 7). Instead, in his estimation, a nation can be set up on the alternative basis of subjective ascription, if collective or individual one can deal with the constraints of *a priori* objectivism (ibid.). By means of a subjective identity, the definition of "nation" can be adapted to territories where people of various languages or other "objective" factors co-exist, as they did in France and the Habsburg Empire (see ibid.). Nevertheless, reducing the criterion of nationhood to one single dimension – a purely subjective definition of one's belonging to a nation or nationality – erodes the multifarious and mixed possibilities with which a people define and redefine themselves as members of groups (1990: 8). Hobsbawm concludes that neither objective nor subjective definitions are thus satisfactory (ibid.). He therefore chooses to begin with the notion of the nation (i.e. with "nationalism") than with the reality it

represents. For he asserts that "'nation' as conceived by nationalism, can be recognized prospectively; the real 'nation' can only be recognized *a posteriori*" (1990: 9). Attention is therefore particularly paid to the changes and transformations of the concept, especially towards the end of the 19th century. He thus stresses the social, historical and local rooted-ness of such concepts.

In my view, Hobsbawm's thinking entails a reconsideration of objective criteria, especially language, which is almost certainly regarded as the essential constituent of nationhood and ethnicity. Moreover, because of Hobsbawm, this seemingly "natural" component is currently undergoing reevaluation. In this light, I believe the questions concerning which issues are pertinent to the Sorbian language in terms of nation-building, nationhood, ethnicity, ethnic identity and culture should be posed to examine why the Sorbian language plays a role of benchmark importance in the Sorbian discourse. This inspires us to further explore how the Sorbian language has been molded to become the most evocative of the shared forms of identification with Sorbian-ness. I believe that these two questions are conducive to crafting an understanding of how an imagined Sorbian community is constructed.

Before turning to the main queries, a brief discussion on the definition of language that is associated closely with culture and nation is in order. By posing two questions, "Who am I" (Wer bin ich) and "where do I belong" (Wohin gehöre ich), Ina-Maria Greverus (1995, 1996, 2002) addresses identity issues in terms of language. In her view, one's self-awareness and identity ensue from the interaction and communication with the other (1995: 20). The central hinge of connection between oneself and the other is language; as she puts it succinctly, "I am because I can speak with others – and: because others speak with me"[54](ibid., emphasis Gerverus'). For her, an identity-creating (identitätstifende) language is thus a relational voice (Beziehungssprache) (ibid.). By putting forward the fact that "the power of speech is among the undisputed essential prerequisites of culture", Greverus situates her positioning of and view on language:

> Language interprets the world; language arranges phenomena so that they may be understood; language expresses experience; language makes communication possible, and hence the shared experience of the world: language is handed down, it is the material we find and constantly express in new inventions: language is creation. Language is universal. (1996: 135)

But the other side to the universality of language is its particularity, which serves as a dividing line that differentiates people in different groups. This particularity is usually connected to and also manifests in the formations of nations and thus stops at national borders (see Greverus 1995: 136). This particularistic aspect of national languages unlocks the nationalist mythology that always declared national languages as "the primordial foundations of national culture and the matrices of the national mind" (Hobsbawm 1990: 54). Moreover, such a dismantling of the fabrication of the nationalist projects patently suggests that "national languages are almost always semi-artificial constructs and occasionally, […] virtually invented." (ibid.) According to

[54] Cf. Ich bin, weil ich mit dem Anderen sprechen kann – und: weil die Anderen mit mir sprechen.

Hobsbawm, to say that national languages are common endeavors to "devise standardized idioms out of a multiplicity of actually spoken idioms, which are thereafter downgraded to dialects, the main problem in their construction being usually, which dialect to choose as the base of the standardized and homogenized language" (ibid.). As he further asserts, the development of every European language involves this process. Without exception, as seen in the case of the Sorbs, the current Upper and Lower Sorbian languages maintain their respective literary status by insisting on having such base since the mid-nineteenth century: the Upper Sorbian language based on the dialect spoken around Bautzen, and Lower Sorbian founded on the dialect around Cottbus. The accomplishment of the literary versions of Sorbian languages, however, is closely aligned with Christianity. The observation that there is a combination of language and religion provides a key for understanding why and how language plays an extraordinarily salient role in the Sorbian discourse.

As stated in the histories of the development of the Sorbian language, the inception of the written Sorbian language is casually related to the Reformation (Jenč 1993: 100). At that time, the Reformation inaugurated the beginning of advanced Sorbian culture as it manifests itself in religious scriptures (Elle 1995: 455). The Lutheran doctrine demanded the spread of Christianity in the mother tongue of those converted.[55] The Reformation was the emergence of the Sorbian written language in the form of the Bible, *das kleine Katechismus* (the simple catechism), and the other scriptures of the Lutheran churches. Although the translation was first based on dialects, it brought the creation of the written Sorbian language in its wake: the oldest, recognized Sorbian document, the Sorbian *Bautzener Bürgereid* (civic oath from Bautzen, from around 1530); the fragment of "*Wendische Taufagende*" (Wendish Baptismal Liturgy), known as the oldest Sorbian religious literature (1543); Priest Mikławš Jakubica's translation of the New Testament (1548, unprinted), based on the then regional dialect of Laubnitz, which is close to Polish; the first Sorbian book concerned with the translation of the simple catechism and the collection of Sorbian hymns by Priest Albin Moller (1574), featuring the typical dialect of western Lower Sorbian; and the first Upper Sorbian book, Wenzel (Wjacław) Warichius' translated version of the simple catechism from 1597. These religious scriptures were translated on the basis of the translators' respective dialects, which were different from each other, but as Sorbian linguist Helmut Jenč remarks, a considerable part of these religious texts from the beginnings of the Sorbian written language originate from the areas of the former Sorbian language regions where the native Slavic language had long since faded away, so to speak (1993: 101). The Sorbian language spoken centuries ago is thus documented (ibid.).

At the turn of the 17th to the 18th century, the different dialectal variants formed the Sorbian written language, but two centers for Sorbian literature gradually crystallized during the two centuries: Bautzen for Upper Sorbian and Cottbus for Lower Sorbian. At the beginning of the incipient standardization of the Sorbian written languages, two translated versions of the New Testament were published almost at the same time:

[55] The Lutheran Reformation elevated German to national language. The theology of Luther was Word-theology (Worttheologie), taking the beginning of St. John's Gospel as the point of departure: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was in God, and God was the Word" (Cf. Im Anfang war das Wort, und das Wort war bei Gott, und Gott war das Wort). The Bible was the only authority of Christian faith, and the Lutheran Church was the communication of all the faithful, the Word of God had to be also preached in the language of the faithful (Schulze 1995: 143).

Michael Frentzel's Upper Sorbian translation from 1706, and Gottlieb Fabricius' Lower Sorbian version from 1709 (Jenč 1993: 103). It should be noted that all of the aforementioned versions of religious texts were translated by Lutheran priests. Their Sorbian Catholic counterparts, who opposed the Reformation, did not start to employ their mother tongue in the Bible until later, exemplified by the translation of the complete Bible by the Catholic priest, Jurij Hawštyn Swětlik, in the period of 1688~1707, which was not printed (1993: 103f.). Swětlik's version, based on his native language, the dialect spoken in Wittichenau, deviates a bit from that of the Protestant Bible based on the Upper Sorbian. Swětlik's successors, among others, Jurij Prokop Hančka and Michał Jan Wałda, worked further on a translation of the complete Bible, but they took the Sorbian spoken in Crostwitz as the foundation of their written language, which is closer to the Protestant version. To sum up, there were two denominational variants of the translated Bible within the Upper Sorbian languages, but the linguistic difference was insignificant (1993: 105).

The religious scriptures noted above illustrate that religion made various vernaculars of the Sorbs emerge and coaxed the latent, inchoative standardization of the Sorbian languages. Moreover, the emergence of the cleavage between Protestant and Catholic manifested itself in their different interpretations of the Bible. Such a process implies, in the words of political scientist John Armstrong, that "the penetrative capacity of religious organizations rendered linguistic factors more significant in their activities" (1982: 241). But notably, despite the endeavors to translate into the Sorbian language at this period of time, these Sorbian religious texts did not spread. There are several reasons for this. First of all, German supremacy hampered the development of the Sorbian language in public life. For instance, in Lower Lusatia at the command of Christian I, brother of Saxony Elector's, the consistory of Lübben (*das Lübbener Konsistorium*) designed a plan in 1668 to eliminate the Sorbian language in stages. Sorbian books and manuscripts were prohibited and the Sorbian language was banned in church since it was seen as "impious language" (*die gottlose Sprache*), among other things (Kunze 2001: 32f.). Second, as to the quality of the translation, owing to a lack of general reference books in Sorbian grammar, orthography and word-formation, something was lost in the translation of the Sorbian religious texts. The translated versions were thus not as good as the original (Toivanen 2001: 42).[56] Last but not least, the Sorbian language was not a printed language at this time: Impecuniosity precipitated little circulation, and these literary products were therefore devoid of the quality of "print-as-commodity" (Anderson 1983: 41). Furthermore, until the middle of the 18th century, a great mass of people were illiterate, and both the Sorbian and German written languages thus played a minor role (Nedo 1965: 107). In other words, no large and new reading audiences developed among the Sorbs meaning that written language and relevant issues were not crucial for average people at this time

[56] In this aspect, Helmut Jenč, as opposed to Toivanen, bestows positive significance on the reference books with which the translators could express themselves correctly in translation. For instance, Jacob Xaver Ticin's *Principia Linguae Wendicae* in Latin from 1670 was the first reference book on the morphological system of the Upper Sorbian written language; the dictionary for Upper Sorbian was Jurij Hawštyn Swětlik's *Vocabularium Latino-Serbicum* from 1721; the reference books in Lower Sorbian include the oldest grammar of Lower Sorbian and Sorbian by Joannes Choinanus of 1650; and Johann Gottlieb Hauptmann's *Nieder-Lausitzsche Wendische Grammatica* from 1761 introduced the grammatical system of the Lower Sorbian written language (Jenč 1993: 106).

(Armstrong 1982: 279; Hobsbawm 1990: 62). As indicated in several works by authors exploring the questions of nations and nationalism, e.g. Armstrong (1982), Anderson (1983), Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1990), the prerequisite for a language that evokes national consciousness and becomes the prime identity criterion is whether the influence of the language reaches a mass level. If not, it is mainly the elite that are affected by the linguistic requirements.

In the case of Sorbian, there are numerous idioms which differentiate from each other formidably. In addition to this, because of their subjugated status as a powerless minority that does not occupy any space in politics, economics, or other public spheres such as education, the Sorbian language was merely spoken in private life, and church was the only place and occasion where the Sorbian written language exerted its influence (Jenč 1993: 108). Under such circumstances, how did the Sorbian language reach average people over long distances? How was the language issue brought to the fore so that it became an engrained constituent of Sorbian ethnicity and identity? The "national rebirth" of the Sorbian people in the middle of nineteenth century provides us with the answer to the above questions, since the function of the Sorbian language as an ethnic and national organizing medium becomes significantly evident in the time after this. While, as discussed earlier,[57] it is clear that the Sorbian national consciousness has burgeoned since 1750. At this time, the tidal wave of pietism and the German Enlightenment swept the Sorbs. Although the Sorbs deviated from and later rejected Enlightenment thought,[58] one vital perspective occurred – the usage of their mother tongue was adapted and became widely valued by Sorbian intellectuals. Since then, the Sorbian language has come to act as a means through which Sorbian-ness is expressed. At the same time, the Sorbian language became equated with the Sorbian-ness, i.e. language and nation intersect to form an indecipherable mixture. Sorbian intellectuals contextualized their language in the rhetoric of national consciousness and devoted themselves to working for their native tongue. Among others, the endeavors of Jurij Mjeń (1727~1785) and Hadam Bohuchwał Šěrach (1724~1773) gained prominence. Mjeń, a priest and a poet, was a pioneer in the creation of secular literature in the Sorbian language. For the Sorbs, this takes on a historical note and denotes a new epochal shift in the history of the written Sorbian language (Šołta 1990: 112). Under the influence of his German contemporary and fellow student in Leipzig, Friedrich Gottlieb Kloptock (1724~1803), Mjeń wrote *Serbskeje rěče zamóženje a chawlba w rěčerskim*

[57] See the section on Sorbian history in this chapter.

[58] Pietism, a progressive branch movement of Protestantism, exerted a great deal of influence on the school and cultural development of the Sorbs in the eighteenth century, but the Sorbian philosopher of the Enlightenment fought against it as it tended to be increasingly religious bigotry (Šołta 1990: 150). As to Enlightenment, according to Koschmal (1995: 49f.), the Sorbs adapted the German Enlightenment in one way, but not in its stricter sense, rather the opposite current "*Schwärmerei*" (enthusiasm) inherent in religion which construed the foundation of the Sorbian rebirth. As Koschmal indicates, the Sorbian contemporaries rarely ever read and absorbed Lessing, Kant, and Descartes, who were the philosophers of the Enlightenment par excellence. Instead, those who did not fall into the category of the history of German literature as philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Friedrich Gottlieb Kloptock, Matthias Claudius, and Ernst Moritz Arndt, were adapted. For instance, Klopstock's work was valued by the Sorbs, while in Lessing's view, Klopstock was not a philosopher of the Enlightenment because sentiment occupied the main terrain in his work rather than reason, which is the core value of the Enlightenment. For the Sorbs, however, Klopstock provided the then Sorbian devotees with a central value – the feeling of national unity – to which they resorted in their nationalist undertakings.

kěrlišu (*Der Sorbische Sprache Vermögen und Lob im Dichterlied*;[59] /The Sorbian Language Fortune and Praise in Poetry) in 1766~67 (ibid.). His 1767 translation of part of Kloptock's *Messias* accentuated his mission to promote his mother tongue and thereby demonstrated that the Sorbian language was not "impoverished, slow, and nonsensical" as accused, rather it was a language with a rich vocabulary and a malleability of expression (Šołta 1990: 151f; Koschmal 1995: 97).[60] As Mjeń's justification of his mother tongue implies, the Sorbian language was charged with a certain value. Explicitly, it was capable of competition with the German language, and implicitly, his justification was an expression of self-defense against the negation of his culture and native tongue and an attempt to rid himself of the feeling of inferiority (Koschmal 1995: 96f.). Another outstanding figure at this time was Šěrach, a village priest and natural scientist who specialized in beekeeping and was devoted to historical research. More importantly, he dedicated himself to the development and the future of the Sorbian language for the honor of his Sorbian *Volk* (Šołta 1990: 113), which is exemplified by his editing books for church and school, such as *Oberlausitzische Schulbüchlein* (Little School Books for Upper Lusatia).

The efforts of Sorbian intelligentsia to increase the application of their mother tongue suggest the restraints and pressure that Germanization caused; meanwhile, the use of the Sorbian language has become a symbol of resistance to German assimilation. The act of compiling school books connotes that the Sorbian *literati* were aware of the fact that education acts as a medium through which Sorbian children could access their mother tongue. Part of their nationalist ideas were expressed in education, or in the education system to be precise, i.e. teachers, school books, classrooms and libraries, which served as a platform where nationalist awareness (Anderson 1983: 108f.) could be implanted in children, who meant the future of the Sorbian people.

Under the influence of multiple substantial concepts such as freedom, equality, and fraternity of all human beings and peoples in the era of German Enlightenment in the 18th century, not only the Sorbian elite, but also German intelligentsia strived toward the development of Sorbian national consciousness (Toivanen 2001: 42). This period of time was characterized by the cultural relations between the Sorbs and Germans. For instance, in the flourishing time of the Enlightenment, the *Wendische Prediger-Kollegium* (Wendish Preachers Society) in Leipzig, founded in 1716, served as a place for forum discussions and as a meeting-place for Sorbs and Germans. On the occasion of the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary in 1766, the association members collected funds for the printing of Sorbian manuscripts and for the foundation of the Sorbian library. In the same year, the first hand-written Sorbian newspaper that focused on the actual political issues was published by both Sorbian and German students[61] who

[59] German translation was by Mjeń's son, Rudolf Mjeń.

[60] As stated in the preface of his translation of *Messias* (1775), "man immerfort die wendische Sprache beschuldigt, sei es arm, kriechen und unfügig, so habe ich diese Vorwürfe einigermaßen ablehnen und ihr Vermögen und ihre Fügsamkeit in etwas anzeigen wollen" (Šołta 1990: 112).

[61] Among others, Georg Körner, who hailed from Zwickau, learned the Sorbian language from a Sorbian soldier when he was a grammar school pupil. In the period of 1739~1742, he studied in Leipzig and was also a member of Wendish Preachers Society. In 1766, he published some articles on the Wendish language and its usage in science and research from the critical angle of philology. It is worth noting that Körner established the usefulness of the Sorbian language by referring its significance for research on early history, genealogy, geography, mining and economics. As to the structure of the society of Sorbian preachers and scholars, in his view, it should not enclose itself only within the field of theology, but

devoted themselves to Sorbian affairs. The *Oberlausitzische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* (The Upper Lusatian Society of Science), founded in Görlitz, 1779 is another example accounting for the interaction between Sorbs and Germans. During the last three decades of the eighteenth century, the foundation of these two societies mentioned above and other events and undertakings, e.g. the publication by two Sorbian students of a monthly journal on instruction and edification, ushered the way for Sorbian national rebirth in the 19th century.

2.2.2 The Written Sorbian Language in the Nationalist Projects

The continued development of Sorbian national and cultural advancement was inspired by the civic democratic (bürgerlich-demokratisch) development of the 19th century and Slavonic national rebirth (Elle 1995: 455f.). The flourishing of culture and scientific research, the emergence of political organizations and movements, and the fight for national independence were characteristic of this period of time (ibid.). Especially the Czech and Polish nationalist movements set examples for the Sorbs. Before the second half of the nineteenth century, the development of the Sorbian culture and language became established, as can be seen by various works on the Sorbian language, history, folklore, folksongs, folk tales and by the establishment of numerous cultural associations. According to Anderson (1983), the idea of nation is imagined in language, particularly in printed language, for language reproduces and disseminates knowledge that contrasts with the scarce and arcane lore of manuscripts. I agree with Anderson's analysis of cultural roots and the origins of national consciousness and apply it to the discussion concerning the Sorbs in the era of nationalism, for, in my view, the publication of the Sorbian newspaper (1842) was highly significant for how the Sorbian language played a vital role in framing Sorbian consciousness.

Throughout the history of the press in the Sorbian language, the first hand-written newspaper saw the light in 1766. As noted earlier, students of the Wendish Preachers Society in Leipzig published this newspaper *Lipske nowizny a wšitizny* (Leipziger Zeitung und Allgemeines/Leipzig General Newspaper) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Society. The newspaper dealt with political and general news, but only two issues were printed. In 1790, the first printed paper, *Měsačne pismo k rozwučenju a wokřewjenju* (Monatliche Schrifte zum Erlernen und Erheitern/Monthly Paper for Learning and Entertainment), a monthly journal, was published by two young Sorbian students Jan Awgust Janka (1764~1833) and Korla Bohuchwał Šěrach (1764~1836, son of Hadam Bohuchwał Šěrach), who majored in theology. They intended for the Sorbian people to acquire knowledge of morals, religion and natural sciences by reading this magazine. The journal was actually a literary product inspired by the French Revolution in 1789, but it was banned after the first issue for the reason that "the Sorbian people would not oppose to their own rule by following the French example"[62](Völkel 1989: 38; Šołta 1990: 116). In the period of 1809~1812, Jan Bohuchwał Dejka (1779~1853), who was a carpenter in Bautzen, put a monthly journal *Serbski powědar a kurěr* (Sorbian Reporter and Courier) into print that aimed to pass on political news to awake

rather be extended to the areas of linguistics, history and other spheres (Šołta 1990: 114).

[62] Cf. Das Sorbische Volk würde sich nicht nach dem Beispiel der Franzosen gegen die eigene Regierung widersetzen.

and promote national consciousness and education of and communication between the Sorbian country folk (*Bauernvolk*) (Völkel 1989: 39). Dejka acquired great prominence by spreading knowledge and political democracy by means of the circulation of the newspaper. He also believed that the Sorbs would be enlightened by speaking Sorbian and reading the Sorbian newspaper everyday (Šołta 1990: 118; Koschmal 1995: 55). In comparison with the above two journals, Dejka's newspaper lasted much longer and was considered to have made an important contribution to the development of the secular written Sorbian language, for the Sorbian language had not fundamentally gone beyond theology and religion until then (Šołta 1990: 118; Völkel 1989: 39). The revolutionary upswing – the Sorbian national rebirth – embedded in the first half of the nineteenth century provided the breeding ground for the constant publication of the newspaper in the Sorbian language. In 1842, journalist Jan Petr Jordan (1818~1891) published the weekly journal *Jutnička* (Morning Star), but, in the same year, it was replaced by *Tydźenska Nowina* (Weekly Newspaper) published by Smoler and Zejler. From 1854 to 1937, the Weekly was then regularly circulated under the name of *Serbski Nowiny* (Sorbian News) and served as a means of promoting the Sorbian nationalist movement and as a defense of the equal democratic rights that the Sorbs ought to have (Völkel 1989: 39).

Scanning through the course of the history of the Sorbian press, it is very clear that Sorbian intellectuals not only proposed to spread knowledge to the general Sorbian public, most of whom were framers, but, what was more important, they claimed to evoke people's national consciousness. In his analysis of the start of the Sorbian newspaper in the mid-19th century, Sorbian historian Peter Kunze formulates the contours of the foremost motivating factor in the endeavors of the Sorbian elite in publishing a newspaper in their mother tongue: The leaders of the Sorbian nationalist movement urgently felt that it was necessary to have a printed newspaper because they perceived the mobilizing and educational influence that a newspaper in one's native language exerted, exemplified by the neighboring Slavonic peoples, particularly the Polish *Tygodnik Literacki* (Literary Weekly) and Czech *Květy* (Flower) (1995: 83).The leading advocates of the nationalist movement eventually came to acknowledge that the hand-written journal was only accessible to a few readers. They thus were aware that mass production was essential for enacting the Sorbian movement. In their view, besides the intelligentsia and other sections of the population who assumed prominence in the fostering and further development of the Sorbian language and culture, the rural mass must also be included in the circle of readers (ibid.).

The foundation of the newspaper is ostensibly one of the cogs in the gigantic machine of the nationalist programs, but it is also actually part and parcel in creating a sense of belonging that consolidated the public at large into a national unity. The language printed in the newspaper is always a national language, implying a national community, a national identity or a national self (Said 1994: 22). The intellectual-awakeners of a national community, such as the Sorbian *literati*, helped to achieve a consciousness of a shared identity by means of journalism. This was also not only the case in the era of 19th century nationalism, but it has continued into the present day. The brief history above of the Sorbian press yields an understanding of the importance of having a printed newspaper in the Sorbian language to the Sorbian nationalist movement, but by asking how a newspaper functions as a medium through which

people feel united, or how a newspaper contributes to the emergence of a nationally imagined community will provide us with impetus and tools for delving beyond this seemingly obvious and "natural" phenomenon of the nationalist epoch. Anderson's account of newspapers (1983: 28f.) is conducive to mapping the field of the Sorbian cultural roots in modern nationalism.

In his exploration of how a people join the imagined community of nations, Anderson considers "a fundamental change in modes of apprehending the world" as the most substantial factor in making it possible to think the nation (1983: 28). This change has a temporal characteristic: simultaneity (1983: 30). Following Walter Benjamin (1973), simultaneity, the idea of homogenous, empty time, holds the past and the future in one instantaneous present, while it is transverse cross-time that is marked by temporal coincidence and measured by the clock and calendar (ibid.). Novels and newspapers and other forms of imagining that thrived in Europe in the eighteenth century technically facilitate the community's imagination of itself as a nation, for the steady onward clocking of calendrical time portrayed the imagined world as a solid community (Anderson 1983: 31; Bhabha 1994: 158). The structure of such forms of representation connects diverse acts and actors on the national level who are largely unaware of each other. This linkage among people who may have never known each other during their lifetime is imagined from the print in newspaper. According to Anderson, two obliquely related sources produce this imagined linkage. The first is calendrical coincidence, emblematic of the date at the top of the newspaper that provides the essential joint that moves the reader steadily down or up through homogenous, empty time. It is emphasized that within that time, the "world" strolls ahead in a robust way (Anderson 1983: 37). The second derivation rests on the relationship between the newspaper, as a form of literature, and the market. The newspaper represents an "extreme form" of literature, is mass-produced and reproduced and is sold on a large scale, but it is of transient popularity. For that very reason of newspaper's ephemera, the quality of the redundancy on the morrow of the printing creates a remarkable mass ceremony: the nearly exactly simultaneous consumption ("imaging") of the newspaper-as-fiction (Anderson 1983: 39). Through reading the newspaper, the reader, noting that exact replicas of his own paper are being consumed by people in his subway, barber shop or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that *the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life* (1983: 39f., my emphasis). The newspaper, embedded in the fact that fictiveness stealthily creeps up on reality, creates a social imagination which operates in anonymity.

As stated in the preceding, the Sorbs of higher learning aimed to cohere the Sorbs, who were actually divided, scattered and had not the slightest notion of identifying with each other into a "fictive" Sorbian collectivity, by means of the circulation of the newspaper in the Sorbian language. Through the Sorbian newspaper, and through Jordan's declaration regarding the expectations of the Sorbian newspaper (1841), people were expected to inform themselves about current political issues, learn new songs and their melodies and ancient poetry and folk songs, narratives, novellas, sagas, legends, fables, fairy stories as well as learn more about the fields of geography, history and natural history (Kunze 1995: 84). In the words of Jan Petr Jordan, the principal goal was to awaken people's sense for higher education (ibid.).

Jordan's contemporary, Smoler, a significant exponent of the 19th century Sorbian

nationalistic movement, addressed his concern in the period of preparation for the newspaper *Jutnička* that he was convinced this newspaper would be the best way of awakening and maintaining the national spirit (Kunze 1995: 86). Notably, in Smoler's estimation, the newspaper was expected to act as a bridge between the Sorbs and other Slavonic peoples so that they could be united as a Slavonic family. In this light, the Sorbian *literati* not only tried to subsume all Sorbs under the Sorbian label, but also under the Slavonic. One of the reasons was to provide orientation and advice as well as assistance for the Sorbian nationalist undertakings through the civic development of the Czech people in the 30s and 40s of the nineteenth century. However, the crucial foundation rested on the same ancestral origin. As Smoler pointed out, "the most important doctrine of the past is that all the nationally conscious Sorbs should have recognized that they were significant part of the large Slavonic tribes, even though they speak German, they will always be the Sorbs in terms of nationality and be the members of the Slavs" [63](Kunze 1995: 94).

In sum, Sorbian intellectuals intended to unite "many Sorbs as one" by providing a newspaper in their native tongue. They believed that any member of the *Volk* should be equipped with the knowledge, skill, and the spirit to produce the lore inherited through Sorbian-ness, and their national feeling for the Sorbian people should also be awakened. The undertaking of the publication and distribution of the newspaper printed in the Sorbian language can be thus explained as an expression of the idea that Sorbian collectivity can be thereby transformed into people's everyday life.

2.2.3 Sorbian Women as the Designated Repository of the Sorbian Culture and Language

2.2.3.1 *Serbska mać* – The Sorbian Mother

In the process of constructing an imagined Sorbian community, women's competence and authority, which is thought to derive from their biological and cultural reproduction, and their ascribed social roles are emphatically homogenized in order to establish their images as "the mothers of the nation". Sorbian women are seen as dutifully passing on their tradition, language and national Sorbian character to their offspring and are expected to conserve their culture as well. These tasks assigned to Sorbian women are meant to assure defense against assimilation by Germans and to maintain a Sorbian collectivity that marks the boundary between "us" (the Sorbs) and "them" (the Germans). In the following, the concept *serbska mać* (Sorbian mother) illustrates how the process in which Sorbian women are obligated to serve as cultural representatives develops.

The term of "*serbska mać*" (Sorbian mother) primarily emerged in the context of the Sorbian "national rebirth" in the 19th century[64]. In that period of time, ethnic

[63] Cf. Die wichtigste Lehre der Vergangenheit sei, dass alle nationalbewussten Sorben erkannt hätten, dass die wichtige Glieder des großen slawischen Stammes seien, auch wenn die Sorben deutsch sprechen, bleiben sie immer ihrer Nationalität nach Sorben und gehören dem Slawentum an.

[64] The specific Sorbian form of idealized motherhood manifests itself in the portrait of the Sorbian mother, which has a certain affinity with the Polish mother (Mutter-Polin/matka polka) in the Polish nationalist projects (Stegmann 1996: 168f.). In her work "Je mehr Bildung, desto polnisher" (the more education, the more Polish), Natali Stegmann examines how Polish women in the province Posen were

intellectuals, including academics, poets, priests and teachers, coined the notion to persuade Sorbian women to get involved in fighting for the national rebirth of the Sorbian *Volk* because women's competence and authority were recognized (Hose 2004a: 77). Sorbian folklorist Susanne Hose, who conducted a research project called "Serbska mać – Mythos und Realität" (Sorbian mother – myths and reality) at the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, investigates in her project "Das Mutterbild bei den Sorben" (the image of mothers of the Sorbs) (2004a: 71f). Hose portrays how Sorbian mothers are represented in Sorbian folk literature. The mother plays no active role in the family in folk literature, but is instead only remembered as dead or is only a secondary character in the sub-plot. However, in Sorbian fairy tales, the mother is typically figured as someone who gives birth and takes life away. In this sense, the figure of the mother shows a woman surrounded by mortal danger, as exemplified in the figures of the *Kornmuhme* (the corn aunt, or corn lady), *Mittagsfrau* (midday woman) or *Gevatterin* (god mother). These female figures in Sorbian folklore express women's superior strength in society. The superior power that women have in terms of being able to bear and nurse children as well as bringing death gives these female figures deserved honor on the one hand; people are frightened of them on the other hand.

Hose helps us to further understand how women were perceived in art by relying on Jan Arnošt Smoler's collection of the Upper Sorbian folk songs from 1841 and the Lower from 1843. Smoler describes the predominant hierarchy and dominant patriarchal economics of the time and provides insight into the construction of manhood and womanhood in a Wendish farming family. The taxonomy that defines gender roles operates according to essentialist terms. The man is the paterfamilias of his family and farm. He has authority over the other family members, servants and farmhands. His wife submits herself to him and dares not contradict him, be presumptuous or improper. Each member in his family, including his wife, children, farm-laborers, maid-servants, obeys the lord of the land. Such a family structure demonstrates a patriarchal autocracy. According to Hose, the paternal image depicted in the literature concerning paterfamilias of the 17th and the 18th century bears similarity with the one portrayed by Smoler. The father is responsible for each member of his family and for his farmhands as well. On the one hand, he has rights in and an obligation to his community; on the other hand, he is a representative who acts in the interest of the community in his family. Consequently, he is perceived as the intermediary between family and society. He helps to enforce social order, and therein

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nationalized in the period of 1870~1914. The concept of the "*Matka Polka*" shares much in common with the idea of the "*serbska mać*". For the Polish people, the Polish mother corresponded with the image of the Holy Mother Maria, who was seen as the symbolic mother of the Polish nation. The women, as Polish mothers, were expected to pass down Christian values in the family and ensure its preservation. The family performed as the breeding ground of the national community. In the literature of the Polish Romantics, the image of the Polish mother was defined by two figures: the ideal Polish mother, and the tragic. The ideal Polish mother was a tender mother and educator of future generations. She was also the guardian of morality, was full of goodness and holiness, and embodied the love and virtues of Christian purity. The tragic Polish mother educated the patriots, who are future defenders of the Fatherland and who usually sacrifice themselves to become martyrs in the name of the nation. In Stegmann' analysis, both the idealized Polish mother and the tragic one were accorded national responsibility, while the former was considered to be the bearer and the latter the educator (1996: 169). The extension of the role as mother in the social dimension was teacher. Both mothers and teachers were expected to set moral examples in the Christian and national sense (ibid.).

lies an implicit connotation that his power is restricted. Therefore, based on paterfamilias literature, it is evident that society tries to enthrone the paterfamilias with the aid of the medium at their disposal.

Hose's empirical research, in a way, suggests a negation of masculine power, as noted above, and a promotion of "*weibliche Autorität*" (feminine authority). In her account, the fact that women's work includes both housework and farming, denoting her responsibility and decision-making, also helps Sorbian women to achieve this female authority, which also infuses them with self-confidence. As one informant of Hose's tells us, "women had to do everything!" (2004a: 76). Women's ability and their responsibility for the all-around fields of work in the farming family give them the pertinaciousness needed to cope with a difficult life. For instance, they are able to manage the farming and the bringing up of children alone when men are sick, dead or while they are doing their military service during wartime.

As noted earlier, the figure of the Sorbian woman that is imbued with ambivalent positioning prevails in reality in the form of the females in the Sorbian sagas, although this quality of ambivalence covers a different spectrum in myths and in reality. The former underlines the natural essence of women – be this as the life-bearer and death-bringer at the same time – while the latter underscores women's social roles that are connected with the domestic domain, where they have a say. In spite of their authority, however, because their traits are manifested in diligence and their readiness to make sacrifices, Sorbian women are paradoxically objectified as those who to be held responsible for the life and death of Sorbian collectivity. The interweaving of the femininity represented in the Sorbian sagas with the context of the farming family provides a foundation for conjuring up the image of Sorbian mothers in bourgeois conditions (Hose 2004a: 77f). Sorbian women's statuses are valued as "Sorbian mother". As Jan Greško (1889) stated in the journal of Upper-Sorbian culture and literature *Łužica* (Lusatia),

> Sorbian women work without a murmur and don't even know what burden they have; because they take their mothers as a model. Only hard-work and the willingness to sacrifice themselves […] If you didn't have such women, there would be certainly no Lusatian Sorbs any more; it is Sorbian women that we thank for the existence of the Sorbian nation.[65](quoted in Hose 2004a: 77)

Jakub Bart-Ćišinski (1856~1909), a major Sorbian poet of the end of the 19th century, had a similar opinion to Greško's idea of regarding Sorbian mothers as the transmitters of unprecedented importance that bestow on their offspring piety and Sorbian consciousness through the Sorbian language (ibid.). The appeals of Sorbian elites to hold mothers in high esteem were intended to keep Sorbian women inside the orbit of the nationalist projects devoted to preservation of Sorbian-ness. As the overall portrayal of Sorbian mothers (in the folk literature, in the farming contexts and in bourgeois conditions) depicts, certain natural characteristics are conferred on women that typecast

[65] Cf. Sorbische Frauen arbeiten ohne zu murren und wissen nicht einmal, welche Last sie tragen; denn sie haben ihre Mütter zum Vorbild. Nur Fleiß und Opferbereitschaft… Hättet ihr nicht solche Frauen, gäbe es sicher keine Lausitzer Sorben mehr; den sorbischen Frauen haben wir für das Bestehen der sorbischen Nation zu danken.

their image and role. The female figures in the Sorbian sagas are creators and destroyers of life at the same time. This provides the Sorbian nationalist schemes with a female prototype that depicts Sorbian women as both overpowering and fatal to the existence of the Sorbian *Volk*. The combination of such prototypes, the capability and the "female authority" of peasant women form a new picture of Sorbian women and the Sorbian mother. This newly drafted version makes Sorbian women "mothers of the nation" who are held responsible for the "virtue and health of the family, for the fostering of the language for the preservation of the entire people" [66](Hose 2004a: 78).

The substance of the constructed notion of "Sorbian mother" is based on the essentialized conceptualization of gender difference. The ontological attributes ascribed to women permeate the narratives about the mother or in the stories about women: for example, the attributes of hard-working, careful, skilful, dexterous, persistent, strict, resolute, holding firm to tradition, God-fearing, pious, patient, and faithful (Hose 2004a: 71). Notwithstanding that women are subordinate to men in farming, which is managed by men, women have their say in domestic spheres. Women have triple roles as the ones who bear and nurture children, as workers on the farms, and as virtue-keepers for their community (ibid.). The idea of the "Sorbian mother" exposes gender as a static dichotomy in ethnic projects: Women are meant to stay at home and cook and be the educators of future loyal citizens, while men are citizens and soldiers. Such a difference between women and men discloses the fixed distinction between private and public fields. Furthermore, the construction of the image of the "Sorbian mother" lays bare the fact that women as a subject loaded with national value and embodied with collectivity represent an idea that was thought out by the founding father(s). The Yugoslavian philosopher, Rada Iveković, who now teaches in Paris, illustrates that this is how women are made to represent an idea, such as Marianne, Britannia etc. (2005: 29). This idea "installs a gender order and reveals how sex or gender is very powerful and operative *normative* ideas" (ibid, emphasis Iveković's). She further emphasizes that "its normative power is situated in its *fictional character*" (ibid, emphasis Iveković's). Iveković's mention of the dialectic between "normative power" and "fictional character" in terms of the construction of gender in the context of the nation discerns that the ascription of gender roles is imagined and made by men who first found a nation then "naturalize" it into how "it has always been". In the case of the Sorbs, the Founding Fathers refer to the ethnic elites who devoted themselves to trying to preserve Sorbian-ness and to warding off the influence of Germanization. They installed a gender order through the concept of the "Sorbian mother". The coinage of the notion of "Sorbian mother" proves this circular process that "the narrative and stereotypes about gender are used directly for images of the community, nation and state, which in turn use these to describe gender" (ibid.). This also conveys the message that Sorbian women are symbolic carriers of Sorbian identity. The embodiment of Sorbian-ness, Sorbian culture, tradition and language in the gendered label "Sorbian mother" carries the connotation that the Sorbian women "represent" Sorbian collectivity, both culturally and ethnically.

[66] Cf. Die „sorbische Mutter" wurde verantwortlich gemacht für Tugend und Gesundheit der Familie, für die Pflege der Sprache bis hin zum Erhalt des ganzen Volkes.

2.2.3.2 Sorbian Women as the Guardians of the Sorbian Language

As discussed in the previous section, the intellect-awakeners living in the period of the Sorbian "national rebirth" included Sorbian women in the nationalist movement by coining the term "*serbska mać*" (Sorbian mother). In this nationalist frame, the Sorbian women were bound to the fulfillment of a mission in the name of the Sorbian *Volk*, such as the fostering and teaching of the Sorbian language. The singling-out of women as the repository of the Sorbian culture and language is predicated on the prevailing ideology that each of the Sorbs is against the incursion of foreign influences and the fact that women especially had no understanding of the German language. As observed by one of the significant Sorabists, Arnošt Muka (1854~1932), at the beginning of 1880s, all of the Sorbs in Nochten spoke Sorbian. At least the half of them, including women, did not understand German (Hose 2004a: 77). On the surface, Muka delineated Sorbian women as being wholly bereft of knowledge of the German language, but on closer examination, the Sorbian women particularly stood out as those who were not untouched by the destructive forces of Germanization. In this sense, Sorbian women in Muka's eyes were considered to be symbolic border guards who warded off the inroad of Germanization. Muka's connecting the Sorbian language with Sorbian women is a factual given, despite of the unskilled connotation stated above, while his contemporary, the poet Jacub Bart-Ćišinski, concretely transforms the quality of being a nation into the image of the Sorbian mother by calling on university students to recall their Sorbian mothers, who taught them devoutness and national consciousness with their first Sorbian word[67](ibid.). Bart-Ćišinski's stance simultaneously implies that the bestowal of national value on the children in their very first utterance in the Sorbian language is accorded as the responsibility of Sorbian women.

Designated as the border guards of the Sorbian collectivity, the Sorbian women are not only charged with the fostering and passing-on of their language, they are also assigned with protecting the Sorbian culture from any foreign incursion. However, with the advent of industrialization, when Sorbian women were expected to fight against the imposing foreign forces, they were depreciated as being "stupid" because the Sorbian men learned German through their increased contact with German. In this sense, the Sorbian women were considered to be border guards who warded off the inroad of the Germanization and were charged to keep the Sorbian-ness intact at home (see Hose 2004a: 78). However, this was not the case. As Germanization wielded its power through the state-administrative institutions, the Sorbian population, especially those who inhabited in the rim regions of the industrialized bilingual area were assimilated more quickly than expected (2004a: 77). Therefore, under such circumstances, the Sorbian women, particularly the elderly, were becoming the last guards and the last practitioners of Sorbian-ness. Muka presents us with a small sketch of the Sorbian women in Lower Lusatia in the 1880s: The German confession and the German church are "nicer" […]. The Sorbian confession and church are only still held for the old women[68](2004a: 78).

[67] Cf. Der Dichter Jacub Bart-Ćišinski hatte studierende Intellektuelle aufgefordert, sie mögen ihrer sorbischen Mütter gedenken, die ihnen Frömmigkeit und Nationalbewusstsein mit den ersten sorbischen Worten beigebracht hätten.

[68] Cf. Die deutsche Beichte und der deutsche Gottesdienst sind „feiner" [...] Sorbische Beichte und

Mina Witojc (1893~1975) was engaged in journalism and writing and inculpated the Sorbian women as "the grave-digger of the nation" (Totengräberinnen ihrer Nation):

> With your tongue, you are the death of your language, your poor people. You don't know how evident it is that your heart will be thus apathetic and empty. You say, "with the Sorbian language, we can't go further." […] And you have one man, who dislikes stepping on to the well-trodden paths of the tedious swarms and gets enthusiastic about good and right things. But you don't support him, rather spoil his good ideas and intentions, and tease him mockingly and contradictory: "What concern is it of yours? People laugh at you! You will change nothing, everything remains the same. The Sorbian-ness has to disappear!" [69] (ibid.)

The criticism that Witojc applied to her peers are redolent of the female figures in Sorbian folklore such as the *Mittagsfrau* (midday woman) as noted in the preceding, who is fraught with the ambivalence of giving birth on the one hand and taking life on the other. In my view, the idea of life here is extended from the individual to the entire Sorbian people. The constituent which fills life refers here to language. It is said "he who ignores his mother tongue, doesn't love his mother" [70](Hose2004a: 77). The notion of the Sorbian mother relating to the mother tongue involves a naturalizing process – preserving and teaching the Sorbian language is "naturally" mother's responsibility. Such a connection fully expresses that women, as biological reproducers, are also cultural reproducers. In the eyes of Muka and Bart-Ćišinski, Sorbian women are seen as the bearers of the Sorbian culture who vitalize the Sorbian language. In Witojc's point of view however, Sorbian women are considered to be those who destroy the Sorbian language and the Sorbian people because they negate their native tongue, their men and their nation.

In the context that it is incumbent upon the Sorbian women to fulfill the mission associated with the maintenance and the passing-on of the Sorbian language, it can be concluded that women's place can be approached in terms of their relationship to men and their people: They are the educators of loyal citizens, they are the protectors of the language and the nation. Within this ideological frame, the *Vereinigung sorbischer Frauen* (Union of Sorbian Women) was established in 1930 (Hose 2004a: 78). Their main object was to promote women's public presence. This connotes that the assigned role of the Sorbian women has undergone certain transformations from being at home and slaving over stoves to entering the public sphere. In the Sorbian discourse, this signifies a change. As can be read in the Sorbian newspaper: The new time today sets the Sorbian people new tasks and makes demands on Sorbian women to provide public proof of their existence and show they are capable of working for their people culturally.

Gottesdienst werden nur noch für alte Weiber gehalten!

[69] Cf. Deine Sprache, dein armes Volk bringst du mit deiner Zunge ins Grab und weiß nicht, wie deutlich damit der Stumpfsinn und die Leere deines Herzens werden. Du sagst: „Mit der sorbischen Sprache kommen wir nicht weiter." […] Und hast du einen Mann, der nur ungern die ausgetretenen Pfade der großen stumpfsinnigen Schar betritt und sich für die gute und rechte Sache begeistert, so unterstützt du ihn nicht, sondern verdirbst seine guten Ideen und Vorsätze und ärgerst ihn mit Spott und Widerspruch: „Was kümmert's dich, die Leute lachen über dich! Du wirst nichts ändern, alles bleibt beim Alten. Das Sorbentum muss vergehen!"

[70] Cf. Wer die Muttersprache vernachlässigt, liebt seiner Mutter nicht.

Sorbian mothers protect our people from destruction. Though they do not always do this consciously, they keep their home and family Sorbian.[71](Hose 2004a: 78)

The above association endeavored to support and encourage women so that they thereby do justice to their assignment for their Sorbian people. They helped Sorbian mothers boost their self-awareness, their knowledge of their mother tongue and helped them to keep their language "pure", instructed them on how to do housework according to the latest hygienic findings, and to educate their children. The middle-class Sorbian women (*Bürgerfrau*) were expected to be engaged in public affairs. They didn't need to take care of family business as much as their female fellows did in the country, but instead had more time for their housework and educating children. The chief task of this association was providing the right training (Hose 2004a: 78).

Although the concept of the Sorbian women has shifted over the course of development of role-ascription – from farmers to middle-class women – they are still fixed in the same nationalist framings, and the onus of maintaining and fostering the Sorbian-ness is placed on them. The sphere of female responsibility shifts from the inner-familial to the public-national. They are not only seen as mothers, but also as educators of the Sorbian collectivity. Based on the prototypical woman and mother, Sorbian women are transformed to the mothers of the Sorbian people. The field assigned to Sorbian women stretches from the private to the public. The private domain includes the family, which is defined as the nucleus of the Sorbian people. The notion of family is usually regarded as the center of the ethnic or national collectivity or the state in the nationalist programs. Conversely, the above collectivity is also understood as an enlarged family (Planet 1996: 197). The mother figure is molded as nationally-minded, and family is also nationally-minded. In this sense, the family is made the national collectivity. In the Sorbian discourse, family is conceived as the central point, driving force and custodian of Sorbian-ness (Tschernokoshewa 1995: 108). The establishment of a Sorbian family is given unprecedented importance, as it signifies the maintenance of Sorbian ethnicity (ibid.).

In conclusion, coinage of the term "Sorbian mother" by the intelligentsia of the Sorbs in the period of the "national rebirth" tried to integrate women into the nationalist project. However, the involvement of Sorbian women in the nationalist movements has been rich in paradoxes and ambiguities. The scholar of gender studies and developmental politics in the Middle East, Deniz Kandiyoti, has studied several contradictory implications of national projects in post-colonial societies, primarily in the Middle East and South Asia, by inspecting the extent to which constituents of national identity and cultural difference are enunciated as forms of control over women and which infringe upon their rights as enfranchised citizens. She argues that women are objectified and "held hostage" as certain figures and symbols in nationalist projects with no room for difference and diversity in women's positioning. Throughout different ideological battles in nationalist and anti-colonialist movements, women are variously portrayed as the victims of their societies' backwardness, symbols of the nation's newly found vigor and modernity, or as the privileged repository of uncontaminated national

[71] Cf. Die neue Zeit, die heute auch dem sorbischen Volk neue Aufgaben stellt, fordert auch von der sorbischen Frau, dass sie öffentlich ihre Existenz unter Beweis stellt und sich fähig zeigt, kulturell für ihr Volk zu arbeiten. Die sorbische Mutter hat unser Volk vor dem Verderben bewahrt. Sie hält, obgleich meist unbewusst, Haus und Famile Sorbisch.

values (1994: 388). In Kandiyoti's view, the integration of women into nationalist projects expresses the regulation of gender, and this is central to the articulation of cultural identity and difference (ibid.). Her observation as follows aptly discloses women's stake in nationalism, which is filled with ambiguity:

> On the one hand, nationalist movements invite women to participate more fully in collective life by interpellating them as 'national' [quotes in quotes are marked with single quotes] actors: mothers, educators, workers and even fighters. On the other hand, they reaffirm the boundaries of culturally acceptable feminine conduct and exert pressure on women to articulate their gender interests within the terms of reference set by nationalist discourse. (1994: 380)

2.2.4 The Media Presence of the Sorbian Language

As stated previously, language has always been the central constituent of Sorbian ethnicity. Through printed language and the nationalist projects, in which the promotion of the Sorbian language and the Sorbian mother was also integrated and played a crucial role, the Sorbs were cohered into a nationally imagined community. Nowadays, the Sorbian language acts as a means through which an imagined Sorbian community is constructed and is not delimited in only the printed form any longer. As time proceeds and through technical progress, is the language has extended into the broadcasting of radio, television programs and the Internet. In the Sorbian discourse, the element of language constitutes the center of ethnic identity. As a minority surrounded by a dominant group in terms of language and cultural communication, media presence is regarded as a matter of survival (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 128). Through print (press and publications) and mass media (film, radio and television), the Sorbian language can branch out from the private sphere into the public domain, meaning the strategy of language development shifts from defensive to procreative. Because the Sorbian language has little prestige, fighting for its acceptance in public is accorded primacy. In addition, the disappearing of the Sorbian language caused by assimilation also sets the tone in terms of the language promotion (Toivanen 2001: 68f.).

The endeavors of Sorbian ethnic activists striving toward safeguarding and developing their language have been altered in the present so that they are associated with the discourse of minority language rights and located within the wider scope of human rights (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 22). As stated in the report regarding the cultural perspectives of the Sorbs *So langsam wird's Zeit*, the right to have one's own language is a basic human right of every nationality (ibid.), and this right should therefore also be secured for the Sorbs. In this endeavor, the Sorbs work to establish language rights regulated at the federal, state and municipality levels, which will be explained in the following:

1) As to the federal level, the Sorbs are regarded more or less as outsiders in the German constitution. According to article 116, paragraph 1 of the German constitution, only *das Deutsche Volk* (German people) is German, a concept grounded on the basis of blood, i.e. ius sanguinis. The status of the Sorbs and their rights are rather declared in article 35, *Protokollnotiz* (protocol report) of the *Einigungsvertrag* (unification treaty) between *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (The Federal Republic of Germany, hereafter

BRD) and *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (The German Democratic Republic, hereafter *DDR*). The Sorbian language is officially recognized in the third paragraph: Members of the Sorbian people/*Volk* and their organizations have the freedom to protect and preserve the Sorbian language in public.[72] The constitution of the courts grants Sorbs the right to speak the Sorbian language in the courts located in Sorbian districts.[73] Furthermore, the right to have bilingual education systems is guaranteed in terms of the reciprocal recognition of specific subjects for the *Abitur* (secondary education degree) examination[74] in the different *Länder* (states) and the cooperation for training and further training Sorbian teachers and Sorbian scholars.[75]

2) In state constitutions, especially in the states of Saxony and Brandenburg where the Sorbs live, the Sorbs have the right to protect the Sorbian language. The Sorbian language and culture is to be promoted and protected, and Sorbian tradition is to be preserved, among other things. Sorbian children have the right to preserve their knowledge of the Sorbian language which they learn at home and to speak and study the Sorbian language in kindergartens and at schools in the German-Sorbian region in both Saxony[76] and Brandenburg[77]. The Sorbian language can be instructed as a mother tongue, a second language, or a foreign language (Toivanen 2001: 65). Students are allowed to take secondary exams (for the *Abitur* degree) in the subject of Sorbian, or they can participate in the additional Sorbian exams. In addition to regulations in

[72] Cf. Angehörige des sorbischen Volkes und ihre Organisationen haben die Freiheit zur Pflege und zur Bewahrung der sorbischen Sprache im öffentlichen Leben. The other three paragraphs are as follows: (1) Das Bekenntnis zum sorbischen Volkstum und zur sorbischen Kultur ist frei (Acting out one's commitment to Sorbian-ness and Sorbian culture is a free choice). (2) Die Bewahrung und Fortentwicklung der sorbischen Kultur und der sorbischen Tradition werden gewährleistet (The protection and development of the Sorbian culture and the Sorbian tradition are ensured). (4) Die grundgesetzliche Zuständigkeitsverteilung zwischen Bund und Ländern bleibt unberührt (The distribution of the jurisdiction of constitutional law between the Federal Government and the states shall be maintained).

[73] Einigungsvertrag, Anlage I, Kapitel III, Sachgebiet A, Abschnitt III, Nr. 1 (r). See also Toivanen 2001: 63.

[74] In accordance with the decision of the conference of the *Kultusminister* (Ministers for Education and Cultural Affairs) on December 1, 1989. Enclosure according to the latest agreement of October 12, 2001. See *Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz und zur Förderung des sorbischen Volkes* (Regulations for the Protection and Development of the Sorbian People) (*Domowina-Information* January 2007, http://www.domowina.sorben.com/documentry/rechtsv.pdf accessed September 12, 2008): 27.

[75] The agreement was reached by *Staatsminister für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (Minister of Science and Arts) and *Staatsminister für Kultus* (Minister of Cultural Affairs) of the State Saxony on June 25, 2002 in Dresden and *Ministerin für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur* (Minister of Science, Research and Culture)and *Minister für Bildung, Jugend und Sport* (Minister of Education, Youth and Sports)on July 11, 2002, in Potsdam. See *Domowina-Information* January 2007: 29.

[76] In the constitution of Saxony, there are several sections on the education rights of the Sorbs, including ordinances for Sorbian schools and other schools in the German-Sorbian region, for parents' involvement in schools, for grammar schools, for secondary schools and *Abitur* exams, for higher education exams for teachers, for school books, and for nursery schools and kindergartens. See *Domowina-Information* 2007: 59ff.

[77] See *Kindertagesstättengesetz* (nursery school law) of June 10, 1992 (clause 3, paragraph 2, no. 5) in the constitution of Brandenburg; the Brandenburg constitution for *Gesetz über die Schulen im Land Brandenburg* (law on schools in the State of Brandenburg) of April 12, 1996 in the version of the *Zweites Gesetz zur Änderung des Brandenburgischen Schulgesetz* (second law for the revision of the school law of the State of Brandenburg) of June 1, 2000 (clause 4, paragraph 5; clause 5; clause 109, paragraph 1; clause 137, paragraph 1 and clause 139, paragraph 1); *Verordnung über die schulischen Bildungsangelegenheiten der Sorben (Wenden)* (ordinance regulating education affairs of the Sorbs (the Wends)) of June 1, 2000. See *Domowina-Information* 2007: 101ff.

education, the right to have state-owned broadcasting is regulated by the interstate agreement between Berlin and Brandenburg [78], and the right to have private broadcasting programs and new media is regulated by the constitution of Saxony[79].

3) The constitutions of Saxony and Brandenburg serve as guidelines for the districts and municipalities of the German-Sorbian region. According to the regulations of the districts and municipalities of both states, regional authorities are responsible for implementing state and federal regulations (Toivanen 2001: 66). That is to say, municipalities are responsible for preserving, fostering and developing the Sorbian language and culture according to the statutes of the districts of Kamenz[80], Lower Silesia-Upper Lusatia[81], Hoyerswerda[82] and Bautzen[83].

In addition to the above national laws on the Sorbian language, the Sorbian language also falls under minority right legislation within international law. According to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe which the *BRD* signed in Strasbourg on November 5, 1992, the *BRD*'s statement in preparation of ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages from January 23, 1998, and the *BRD*'s statement regarding fulfilling the obligations of the European Charter For Regional or Minority Languages with regard to Part Two of the Charter from January 26, 1998, the rights regarding the following public spheres of the Upper Sorbian and the Lower Sorbian languages are ensured[84] (*Domowina-Information* 2007: 10): education (§8), judiciary (§9), administration (§10), media (§11), all cultural and social activities and events (§12), economic and social life (§13), and

[78] For the latest regulation, see *Staatsvertrag über die Errichtung einer gemeinsamen Rundfunkanstalt der Länder Berlin and Brandenburg* (interstate agreement on the foundation of a common broadcasting corporation of the State Berlin and Brandenburg) from June 25, 2002. See *Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz und zur Förderung des sorbischen Volkes* (*Domowina-Information* January 2007): 100.

[79] See *Gesetz zum Staatsvertrag über den Mitteldeutschen Rundfunk* (Law on the interstate agreement on Central German Broadcasting) of June 27, 1991 (clause 6); *Gesetz über den privaten Rundfunk und neue Medien in Sachsen* (Law on private broadcasting and new media in Saxony) of January 9, 2001, in accordance with the law as it stands since April 1, 2003; *Gesetz zum Fünften Staatsvertrag zur Änderung rundfunkrechtlicher Staatsverträge und zur Änderung des Sächsischen Privatrundfunkgesetzes* (Law on the fifth interstate agreement amending the interstate agreement on broadcasting and the law of private broadcasting in Saxony) from December 12, 2000 (preamble). See *Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz und zur Förderung des sorbischen Volkes* (*Domowina-Information* January 2007): 77f..

[80] *Satzung zur Wahrung, Förderung und Entwiklung der sorbischen Sprache und Kultur im Landkreis Kamenz* (Statute for preserving, fostering and developing the Sorbian language and culture in the district Kamenz) from April 9, 1997. See *Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz und zur Förderung des sorbischen Volkes* (*Domowina-Information* January 2007): 121f.

[81] *Satzung zur Wahrung, Förderung und Entwicklung der sorbischen Sprache und Kultur des Niederschlesien Oberlausitzkreises* (Statute for preserving, fostering and developing the Sorbian language and culture of the district Lower Silesia-Upper Lusatia) from October 10, 1995. See *Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz und zur Förderung des sorbischen Volkes* (*Domowina-Information* January 2007): 116f.

[82] *Satzung über die Förderung der sorbischen Sprache und Kultur in der Stadt Hoyerswerda* of October 29, 1996 (Statute on fostering the Sorbian language and culture in the city Hoyerswerda) from May 18, 1999. See *Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz und zur Förderung des sorbischen Volkes* (*Domowina-Information* January 2007): 125f.

[83] *Satzung über die Förderung der sorbischen Kultur und Sprache* (*Landkreis Bautzen*) (Statute on fostering the Sorbian culture and language) (District Bautzen) from May 18, 1999, revised on November 15, 2004. See *Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz und zur Förderung des sorbischen Volkes* (*Domowina-Information* January 2007): 129f.

[84] According to the Charter, besides Upper and Lower Sorbian, minority languages in Germany are Danish, North Frisian, Saterland Frisian, the Romance language of the German Sinti and Roma, and a regional language is Lower German.

transnational/transregional exchange (§14) (Toivanen 2001: 232).

Drawing upon the international protection of minorities as stated above, the Sorbs enforce the protection and development of the Sorbian language in three ways: through education, school and mass media. According to *So Langsam wird's Zeit*, their first and foremost priority is to upgrade the social prestige of the Sorbian language (1994: 109). In the course of history, the ban of the Sorbian language in Bemburg/S., Altenburg, Zwickau and Leipzig from 1293 and 1327 brought assimilation and discrimination of the Sorbian language and its speakers in its wake. Especially in the frame of modern German nationalism, Sorbian language was associated with tradition, backwardness, primitiveness and obsolescence. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the status of the Sorbian language. The use of the Sorbian language in mass media has a decisive influence over the prestige of the language (*So Langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 109). That is to say, Sorbian language media is an important resource for the positive self-representation of the Sorbs, a group which is positioned as an ethnic minority in Germany.

As to the printed media, *Domowina-Verlag GmbH* (Domowina Publishing House) runs the gamut of the editorial and technical establishment, marketing and sales of newspapers, magazines and books in the Sorbian language. Notably, the tasks undertaken by *Domowina* are different from normal publishers, as it takes the crucial responsibility for the national literature of the Sorbs. Additionally, it is responsible for the constant stability of the Upper and Lower Sorbian languages by dint of publication. The development of the Sorbian language (new terminology), the codification of the standard written language (dictionaries and grammar books) and the circulation of the language also fall into the working field of *Domowina* (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 122). *Domowina*'s publications include school books, children's books, general and academic literature, a daily newspaper (*Serbske Nowiny*/Sorbian News in the Upper Sorbian language, which was called *Nowa doba*/New Epoch until 1990), a weekly newspaper (*Nowy Casnik*/New Newspaper in the Lower Sorbian language), a weekly for Catholic Sorbs *Katolski posoł* (Catholic Messenger, semimonthly until 1991), a monthly paper for Protestant Sorbs *Plohaj bóh* (Greeting God), a magazine for children *Plomjo* (Flame), a magazine for culture *Rozhlad* (Review), a magazine for Sorbian teachers *Serbska Šula*/Sorbian Schools, and an academic journal *Lětopis*. Besides *Domowina*, there are three bilingual publishers (Sorbian and German): *ENA-Musikverlag Elke und Jan Paul Nagel* (ENA - Music Publishing Company Elke and Jan Paul Nagel) in Litschen, Saxony, *SERVIsound Sorbischer Musikverlag* (SERVIsound - Sorbian Music Publishing Company) in Fredersdorf, Berlin and *Lusatia Verlag Dr. Stübner & Co.* (Lusatia Publishing Dr. Stübner & Co.) in Bautzen.

Regarding audio-visual media, the Sorbs have radio and television programs in both the Upper and Lower Sorbian languages. Additionally, there are some programs on the Internet, such as *Serbske Nowiny im Netz* (Sorbian News on the Web, www.serbske-nowiny.de). [85] Radio programs are broadcast in the Upper Sorbian language on *Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk* (MDR, Central German Broadcasting) 3 hours daily from Monday to Saturday and 1.5 hours on Sunday and in the Lower Sorbian language on *Ostdeutsche Rundfunk Brandenburg* (ORB, Eastern German Broadcasting-

[85] There are also *Runjewoline* (www.runjewonline.info) and *Das sorbische Cyberdorf* (The Sorbian Cybervillage, www.internecy.de).

Brandenburg)[86] 1 hour daily during the week, 1.5 hours on Sunday. With respect to television programs, ORB and MDR have different attitudes toward Sorbian programs. ORB has offered a 0.5 hour-slot each month for broadcasting *Łužyca* (Lusatia Magazine) since 1992, while MDR has disregarded the state agreement for radio broadcasting and refuses to follow ORB's footstep in television (Tschernokoshewa 2000). Until August 2001, MDR broadcast a half-hour slot every month for *Wuhladko* (Prospect).

MDR finally broadcast the Sorbian program after a massive petition from the Sorbs and support from the German minister-president of Saxony, Kurt Biedenkopf. However, the MDR director-generalship's refusal reflects its view of minorities – Sorbian-ness as Otherness and difference. In the newspaper *Lausitzer Rundschau* (Lusatian Panorama) from January 10, 1994, the director-general of the MDR, Prof. Dr. Udo Reiter, replied to this issue by stating: They wanted and had to do something for the Sorbs, but it was difficult for MDR as an institution belonging to three federal states – Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony – to explain to the Thuringian and Saxony-Anhalt audiences why it should broadcast a Sorbian-speaking program in their residential states when no Sorbs live there (Tschernokoshewa 2000: 61). MDR also had a technical problem broadcasting a Sorbian-speaking program in the state of Saxony because it was unfeasible to have a station solely for the Sorbs and to supply them with a channel (ibid.). Reiter instead suggested that the Sorbian topics should be placed with priority within the program on the state of Saxony and within the MDR community program, so that the Sorbian affairs, their culture, customs, and everyday life would not be ghettoized (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 133).

The Sorbs refuted Reiter's statement about ghettoization and understood MDR's keeping a studio in Bautzen especially for Sorbian radio programs as an absurd counter-argument to MDR's stance on Sorbian-speaking television program (ibid.). Moreover, Tschernokoshewa voiced her criticism against Reiter's account, implying a subtext: culture is demarcated in isolation (Tschernokoshewa 2000: 62). This was exemplified by Reiter's argument that it would be inappropriate to broadcast a Sorbian program in the states where no Sorbs are living. The channel ought to be otherwise separate and only for the Sorbs in Saxony, but this was technically impracticable. Simply put, it was opined that "Sorbian programs for the Sorbs, Thuringian programs for the Thuringians, German programs for the Germans" (ibid.). This means that ethnic-cultural difference was fixed as a homogeneous Other, and impervious boundaries between cultures and groups of people were created (see ibid.). But notably, the Sorbs' undertaking to put pressure on the MDR can be not only viewed as the Sorbs, as an ethnic minority in Germany, intervening in the representation politics of the majority society, but the Sorbs' effort is also exposed as leveling out the imbalance of representation in the dominant cultural production of mass media.[87]

Drawing upon the Treaty of Maastricht (or the Treaty on European Union, 1993), the Sorbian activists claim that, in order to maintain national and regional variety in

[86]*Ostdeutsche Rundfunk Brandenburg* (ORB, Eastern German Broadcasting Brandenburg) and *Sender Freies Berlin* (SFB) have merged into *Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg* (RBB, Broadcasting Berlin-Brandenburg) as of May 1, 2003.

[87] I draw my inspiration from Kira Kosnick's study (2007) on migrant media as exemplified by the Turkish migrant in Germany.

media other than the press and publications, the presence of the language in films, on the radio and on television is significant for the Sorbian minority. As reported in *So langsam wird's Zeit* (1994: 129), Sorbian radio programs contribute to maintaining the national existence and viability (Lebensfähigkeit) of the Sorbian people. Psychologically, through its being present, the speakers of the Sorbian language feel that the status of their language is enhanced so that a certain kind of feeling of equal value arises. In this sense, Sorbian-speaking media can be viewed as a vital resource for producing Sorbian identity and on affirmative way. Broadcasting in the Sorbian language has a national agenda: to consolidate the Sorbs' sense of regional and communal belonging. People who have a command of the Sorbian language can be thus also passively reached by the broadcasting of Sorbian radio programs. It is believed that TV programs can exert greater influence over society than radio broadcasting in terms of imparting cultural values and interests because television is considered to play an important role in the strengthening of Sorbs' conception of themselves and the cultural-linguistic development of the Sorbian minority (ibid.).

2.2.5 A Closing Note

Language has been understood as one of the most significant constituents in the discourse of Sorbian ethnicity. Through the course of the development of the Sorbian language, it has become evident that the actual various Sorbian variants were gradually subsumed under the labels of the Upper and Lower Sorbian languages respectively. The process involves one specific point: the emergence of printed Sorbian language through which the imagined Sorbian community has been constructed. However, this prompts the question of homogenization. The process of homogenization includes all groups of speakers of Sorbian variants under the label of Upper and Lower Sorbian languages without regard to whether groups so labeled are part of the same state. This poses a challenge to the international and national law protecting minorities. The question is "what actually constitutes a 'group' and, given the complexities involved in defining groups, whether any rights – linguistic or otherwise – can actually be attributed to them" (May 2004: 282). The next question concerns the problem of essentialism. Minority language rights imply that a linguistic community can be easily definable or rather that all group members can be chiefly identified and are identifiable by their language (ibid.).

The orchestration and promotion of cultural and linguistic homogeneity at the collective level is isomorphic to the construction of a national collectivity. This is also what the nationalist activists strive for. They intend to demonstrate an outwardly unified image in favor of gaining resources for the development of their minority status. As Toivanen succinctly puts it, the regulations of the international protection of minorities provide the minority activists with an appropriate vocabulary because the minority group is always present as being unified with a fixed collective identity, the characteristics of which are language, religion, culture, tradition, which are classified in a clear-cut way (2001: 249). Notably, Toivanen reminds us that the above features are supposed to constitute an ethnic group and are performed in a singular form (ibid.). In this way, although the numbers of minority members are in lower quantity and have a weak support system, the mobilization of a corresponding, defined minority identity

seems to work (ibid.). Furthermore, the minority activists can thus always argue that they have a right and obligation to rescue their nation and their people and to ask for protection and promotion, irrespective of their numbers (ibid.).

In the case of the Sorbs, as has been repeatedly emphasized, the Sorbian language has been considered the bearer of all cultural characteristics and the principle element of Sorbian ethnicity. Simultaneously, the element of language is also understood as one of the most significant identity resources in the Sorbian discourse. However, such an assertion cannot be wholly applied to all the Sorbs. In contrast to Catholic Sorbian Lusatia, the Sorbian language is scarcely applied in the daily life in the Protestant regions around Bautzen and Neisky and in Lower Lusatia.[88] The structure of ethnic identity is less influenced by the factor of language (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 107). In these regions, the Sorbian language thus loses its function as a means of communication, and therefore rather plays a symbolic role (see Toivanen 2001: 44). What this demonstrates is that the internal difference in how the Sorbs themselves see the Sorbian language in different areas should be taken into consideration. The language situation in the Protestant area and Lower Lusatia contrasts with the prevailing discernment and viewpoints of the Sorbian discourse, especially those evident in the Sorbian newspaper. In addition to the recurrent emphasis on the importance of the Sorbian language, it is apparent that a loss of the Sorbian language signifies a fading of the Sorbs' vitality. In other words, the Sorbs will disappear if the Sorbian language can not be maintained. The idea of "preservation" of the Sorbian language is therefore a major theme for the Sorbs. However, as German folklorist Konrad Köstlin notes in his study "*Lust aufs Sorbischsein*" (Fancy being Sorbian), the element of language should not be the only sign of life for the Sorbs, otherwise the Sorbs will remain trapped in the 19th century ideology of the *Sprachnation* (2003: 429). Furthermore, the idea of language maintenance encourages the act of "purification" of the Sorbian language. But there is no "pure" Sorbian language. In this sense, the Sorbian language is overemphasized as being an exclusive, important constituent of the widespread definition of Sorbian ethnicity and identity and cannot be seen as a shibboleth to distinguish Sorbs from non-Sorbs (2003: 437f.). The element of language should therefore be put under reevaluation in the modern Sorbian discourse. The first step is to be aware that language is only one part the life world, not its totality (2003: 441).

2.3 Traditions of the Sorbs

As far back as summer 2002, the courses, activities and events held at the International Summer School in Sorbian Language and Culture hosted by the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen created, according to my experience of participating, a crisp, clean picture of what the Sorbian traditions are. As an arena for teaching the Sorbian languages (Upper and Lower Sorbian) and familiarizing students from abroad and from German-speaking

[88] The Sorbian-speaking population in the above regions makes up 30% to 35% (*So Langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 107). Following Spieß (1995), Toivanen provides us with a concreter quantity: 16,200 people have a knowledge of the Lower Sorbian language, 5,134 of them claim the Sorbian language as their mother tongue and apply it actively in daily life (2001: 44). However, 90% of 5,134 people are older than 55 years old. The rest of them can either understand the Lower Sorbian language in a passive way or they claim German as their native language because they think they speak German better (ibid.).

Germany (two students) with Sorbian culture, the Summer School presents traditions that best express "Sorbian-ness". These include music, traditional costumes, folktales told against a backdrop of a traditional farmhouse, culinary traditions (among others, the Sorbian wedding soup) and religious practices and artifacts (e.g. Easter eggs). In addition, we students were also taken to visit some places which had an aura of a distant Sorbian past, such as monuments and churches. In my view, Summer School is a prime microcosm in which the Sorbs themselves not only identify certain practices and artifacts as essential cultural traits inherent in Sorbian traditions by means, but also convey to the participants the important message that these traditions are "Sorbian". In addition to the example of the Summer School, the brochure *Customs and Traditions of the Sorbs in Lower Lusatia* (1997) also adumbrates that certain Sorbian folk songs, Sorbian traditional and festive dress, religious holidays (especially Easter) and seasonal festivals[89] are Lower Sorbian traditions. Although this pamphlet only describes Lower Sorbian customs and traditions, it provides us with a good impression of how the Sorbs generally perceive "tradition". Putting these two sources (Summer School and the brochure) together, it can be assumed that Sorbian folk songs, music, Sorbian traditional costumes, culinary traditions, religious practices and artifacts, religious holidays and seasonal festivals are commonly understood as traditional by the Sorbs. However, it is very important to be aware that there are still other Sorbian traditions which vary from one region to another in Lusatia – different traditional costumes, architecture, oral narratives and customs, etc. – as a consequence of different historical, geographical, administrative and economic development (see *So Langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 136).

From the Sorbs' point of view, tradition acts a fundamental feature with which they can mark their ethnic distinction and construct their Sorbian-ness. In other words, Sorbian cultural inheritance becomes manifested in a variety of traditions as mentioned above. As a disfavored ethnic minority, the traditions of the Sorbs constitute the essence of an ethnic identity which allows them to survive in a life world surrounded and besieged by the assimilation enforced by the Germans. The construction of tradition therefore dictates the main terms in the identity work and nation building of the Sorbian people. If we rely on tradition as one of the key elements – along with Sorbian history expressed through the concept of *Volk*/people, owning a "Sorbian" homeland, Sorbian language – then culturally and ethnically identifying Sorbian collectivity becomes closely connected with the ideas disseminated and strategies applied in those Sorbian nationalist projects that emerged in the middle of the 18th century. Remarkably, this undertaking of employing tradition as one of the most predominant central traits in building an imagined Sorbian community is not a singular one, for it evidently drew inspiration from and followed the model of German Romanticism and Slavonic national rebirth.

For the Sorbs, tradition serves as an explicit attribute that they use to accent their "Sorbian-ness". They also use it to make themselves culturally distinct from the Germans. Among the traditional practices and artifacts mentioned above, it is my

[89] *Ptaškowa swajźba* (Bird's wedding on January 25th); *Zapust* (Lower Sorbian Schrovetide); *Jatšy* (Easter); *Majski bom* (Maypole); *Jańske rejtowanje* (St. John's Day Ride); *Kokot* (rooster plucking); *Rejtowanje wo kołac* (Stollen-riding); *Janšojski bog* (Gift-giving in Jänschwald); *Nowolětka* (New Year's Figures).

opinion that traditional Sorbian costumes deserve the most attention because dressing rightly and overtly visualizes Sorbian-ness. In this sense, traditional costumes can be seen as best expressing and symbolizing Sorbian ethnicity and identity. Moreover, it is typically women who dress in traditional attire, allowing them to be taken for granted as bearers of tradition. The practice of dressing in traditional costumes is thus a germane example for understanding the intersection of gender and ethnicity in the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects.

It is therefore vital to investigate just how tradition is created as one of the important constituents for building an imagined Sorbian community and to especially analyze the construction of traditional Sorbian costumes as a visual marker of Sorbian consciousness. The first part of this inquiry delves into how the Sorbs perceive and interpret tradition and is based on the discourse of German romantic nationalism and the construction of tradition in folklore studies, which provide important insights and ideas for the Sorbian nationalist projects of tradition building. Subsequently, analysis of the traditional Sorbian costumes further elaborates on how dress functions as a symbol of "Sorbian-ness". In this process, women, as the wearers of traditional dress, are at the same time constructed as the "icons of tradition". Therefore, in the second part of this section, I will focus on how traditional Sorbian costumes provide a basis for understanding the interplay of gender and ethnicity. Finally, one example of attitudes toward traditional costumes will provide us with a new encounter with Sorbian tradition as tradition that is not understood merely as cultural heritage handed down through time, but rather as a social life practice and strategy for coping with life.

2.3.1 Tradition from the Sorbian Perspective

As can read in the pamphlet *Customs and Traditions of the Sorbs in Lower Lusatia* (1997) that I alluded to earlier, "the Sorbs are a small group of Slavonic people who have maintained their language and culture. They practice their own costumes and traditions […] A look back into history reveals that the practice of customs and traditions in the villages was crucial for their own preservation of national individuality" (Sorbian Cultural Information Center 1997: 1). The introductory remarks reveal tradition (which includes customs) as an indispensable characteristic for describing or defining the Sorbs. Some elementary traits of tradition – "having a past" (history), being pre-modern/rural (living in villages), having the need to be "distinct" (national individuality) – are concomitantly mentioned here. Folk music, traditional dress, and religious and seasonal celebrations are also valued as tradition in the Sorbian community. Later in this informational leaflet, a sense of a "past" of pristine origin is accorded significance is ascribed to "Sorbian" tradition, as can be seen in "[…] only a Sorbian origin will remain the background for any new developments in Lusatia […] 'old Sorbian customs' embody a particular value and have a specific meaning for the future" (1997: 4). Here, tradition is further enhanced as a "sacredness of the past" (Shils 1971: 138f.) through old Sorbian customs and a value that is immortalized through origin and made more beautiful through history. Needless to say, in portraying the historical depth which is central to tradition, the myth of origin forcefully intensifies and reinforces Sorbian tradition as a bundle of cultural traits handed down over a long temporal continuity. The account – "this custom originated in pre-Christian times and is

founded on the mystic imagination of our ancestors" (Sorbian Cultural Information Center 1997: 4) – is a telling example of this.

As seen in the above brochure on Lower Sorbian tradition, tradition is conceived in a commonsense definition, meaning cultural heritage is "handed over" and "handed down" from generation to generation in Sorbian society. In the social sciences and in historical discourse, "tradition" is taken to mean the cultural heritage of a society, a social or an ethnic group or a religious community. The term often denotes a complete set of practices, meanings and artifacts that is transported from the past to the present by members of a society or a social group. It refers to symbolic forms, such as customs, music, and narratives, which expressively assert a cultural peculiarity and historical continuity of the tradition-bearing people or society. Its ethnic and national quality conveys the notion that tradition is congruous with a folk culture that is practiced in a rural, pre-modern social world. Seen from this perspective, tradition is commonly assumed to constitute the essential attributes of cultural traits and therefore becomes easily trapped within a naturalistic point of view.

The conventional understanding of tradition as cultural heritage with an ethnic and national tone can be traced as far as back as the birth of the scholarly discipline of folklore studies which was inceptively conceptualized and institutionalized by the pre-romantic and romantic philosophers, literary critics, and authors in 18th century Germany, including Johann Gottfried Herder (1774~1839), who collected and published German-language folksongs and the Brothers Grimm, who collected folktales and legends (see Bendix 1997: 25ff.).[90] The attempts to discover and find the locus of folk-ness in folksongs, folktales, folk literature, languages and history during this period can be regarded as a counterstatement to the Enlightenment agenda of the 18th century which assumed that pragmatic and objective rationalism alienates historical origin and tradition (Bendix 1997: 28; Kaschuba 1999: 170). In order to invigorate and enliven the tradition which had been severed from the present and "petrified" as a mere past in the process of Enlightenment, the fortification of some cultural forms, such as legends, traditional costumes and customs, was used for tradition building. For instance, in German-speaking Europe, intellectuals' endeavors of collecting myths and legends form the base of work in building German tradition. This also manifests itself in a connection between folk culture and national identity, as can be seen in the Brothers Grimm's collections of folk tales, which provided a cultural basis for a shared German consciousness and an apposite education for children permeated with German-ness (Bendix 1997: 49ff.; Kaschuba 1999: 35).The Romantic spirit of naturalizing folk culture paved the way for the German and virtually Europe-wide national movements in the early 19th century (Kaschuba 1999: 35).

The discipline of folklore studies in German-speaking countries played a role in facilitating the consolidation of continuity and tradition as an innate trait of a single social group which is simultaneously slanted with ethnic and national distinction. This connotes that folklore studies positioned itself as the scholarship of safeguarding, celebrating and protecting a traditionalism imbued with historical value that resists modernization (see Welz 2000: 5). As German ethnologist Hermann Bausinger tells us, "the most fundamental stage in the development of folklore studies (*Volkskunde*) in the

[90] See also Chapter 2.1.

19th century should be seen as a response to the perceived disorganization, mobilization, and transformation of society" [91](Bausinger 1969: 232). Tradition captures the quality of antiquity, authenticity, constancy and continuity, which are believed to best express the cultural identity of a nation or an ethnic group. Therefore, tradition has to be preserved so that the national or ethnic culture will not be contaminated by modernity. In this sense, tradition constitutes an anti-modern force. This anti-modern impulsion and thrust, however, also discloses that tradition is actually a product of modernity (Giddens 1990; Bausinger 1991; Welz 2001). The knowledge of folk traditions constituted by the academic endeavors of folklore studies in the 19th century furnished the ideological foundation for the modern phenomenon of nationalism. In the nationalist projects of the 19th century, national culture and identity were constructed on the basis of the essentialist conception of tradition practiced in pre-modern society (Welz 2001: 588). Significantly, folk culture in the rural social world is not believed to be invaded by the devastating force of modernization, but rather the intact rural life is believed to contain the very purity and authenticity of the cultural heritage of the national and ethnic collectivity. In the field of folklore studies, rural society, which is located as the center of its research, is classified as a traditional society where social life follows traditional orders and scarcely ever undergoes change. In such forms of society, culture is characterized as stable and static and as a system of temporal and spatial continuity (Kaschuba 1999: 168).

Under the influence of German Romanticism and the nationalist movement in the 19th century discussed above, the Sorbian elites attempted to locate Sorbian-ness by ascribing traditions with the authenticity and value inherent in Sorbian-ness, for example by collecting folk songs, folk tales and proverbs, and documenting the Sorbian language as well as the other materials from folk culture of the Sorbian society.[92] These activities are considered as providing an ideological pedestal for raising Sorbian consciousness and building Sorbian identity. As seen in the Sorbian historical discourse in which German assimilation and conquest occupy the main terrain, the Sorbs have always constructed their identities in opposition to a collective Other – the German people. Defense constitutes the core significance of the Sorbian identity. The protection and preservation of Sorbian culture and traditions are therefore seen as a force of resistance to Germanization: As a result of the persistent way of thinking that "they are threatened with extinction", tradition has unequivocally become a central trait with which the Sorbs mark their ethnic distinction from the Germans and construct their Sorbian-ness. However, using tradition – when viewed as cultural heritage and customs handed down from one generation to another – as a defense mechanism against external influence (e.g. exerted by the Germans) connotes an anti-modern thrust. In this sense, the relation of "tradition" to "modernity" can easily be seen as a yawning gap and shows the controversy reverberating throughout the conventional discourse surrounding the concept of Sorbian ethnicity.

In the case of the Sorbs, the untouched vision of a culture and tradition imbued with rural life is deemed here to be a blocking device used to escape the erosion of Sorbian-

[91] Cf. Die wesentlichen Entwicklungsphasen der Volkskunde im 19. Jahrhundert sind zu sehen als Antwort auf die Desorganisation, die Mobilisierung und Umwandlung der Gesellschaft. English translation see Welz (2000: 5).
[92] See also Chapters 2.1 and 2.2.

ness caused by modernization. The values accorded to the Sorbian culture are "visibility, the usefulness and the objective meaning" of it (Koschmal 1995: 101). Cultural performance thus places much emphasis on its practical function, which is intended to influence and strengthen Sorbian consciousness of recipients. This way representing is directed at immediately perceptible objects. In art for instance, the main motif of painting is the Sorbian traditional costume and its wearers, which exhibits the apparent illustration of an intact national costume and traditions (ibid.). Besides women in ethnic dress, rural life, peasants, older traditions and certain motifs inherent in Sorbian-ness are the primary themes of Sorbian art (Mirtschin 1992, 1993). However, such portrayals of national and cultural characteristics are demonstratively displayed in the form of the ethnic cliché (Koschmal 1995: 101). Under these circumstances, an often-presented idyllic-seeming culture therefore ensues, while at the same time, folkloristic brilliance veils the real life of the Sorbs (see Koschmal 1995: 101; Köstlin 1993: 6). The concealment of everyday life not only renders the Sorbs timeless and changeless, but also makes them a "*Folkvolk*" (folk people) (Koschmal 1995: 71, referring here to Róža Domašcyna) who seem only to really live in leisure time, at festivals and holiday celebrations. This development in Sorbian culture allows the Sorbs both to be substantialized by others and homogenized by themselves. The mechanism of substantialization and homogenization involves the process of "folklorization". As numerous examples in the German-speaking press illustrate, such as "Yesterday is here"[93] (Tschernokoshewa 2000: 50f.), the Sorbs preserve their "unbroken traditions" (2000: 52), Sorbian culture is naturally equated with "ancientness" and "rural life", or "the Sorbian people have always been farmers"[94] (2000: 56). In addition to these Sorbian images portrayed in the press, exhibitions at the Sorbian museums in Lusatia are also illustrative of substantializing and homogenizing the Sorbian people, culture and traditions (see Tschernokoshewa 1995: 107). For instance, at *Serbski musej*/*Sorbisches Museum* (Sorbian Museum) in Bautzen, Sorbian history (early history of the Sorbian settlement regions), collections of traditional Sorbian costumes from the regions in Lusatia and finally the emergence and development of the written Sorbian language and literature constitute the standing exhibitions. In constructing tradition as one of the vital components of ethnic and national culture and identity, museums, monuments, churches and memorials become places of national collective memory harboring an ethos of the past, symbolizing national history and connoting national community (see Kaschuba 1999: 172, referring to Michel de Certeau). However, this way of displaying Sorbian-ness at the museum – according to the Sorbian discourse on the notion of ethnicity inherent in a shared history, tradition and customs, and language – the Sorbs become not only fixed as a group unchanging through time, but it also establishes them as a pre-modern people (Tschernokoshewa 1995: 107). Moreover, such a presentation of Sorbian culture and tradition is more a static representation than a vivid image of everyday life (see Toivanen 2001: 125f.).

As discussed earlier, tradition-led cultural practices have played a dominant role in the Sorbian discourse because the Sorbs believe their Sorbian-ness can be thus illustrated and they can therefore differentiate themselves from others. In this process, the overarching rubric of authentic traditions not only "folklorizes" them but also

[93] Cf. Gestern ist hier.
[94] Cf. Die Sorben waren von jeher Bauern.

removes them to a cultural realm far from the modern world, which results in camouflaging their real social lives. If culture is not constructed as a strategy for coping with life, if culture only means an ostensible fostering of language, ethnic dress and folk songs, if culture is instrumentalized to demonstrate Sorbian-ness by sticking to the preservation of traditional Sorbian traditions and customs, then the Sorbian community presents a changeless image fixed in the traditional life world. It thus falls into the category of a pre-modern world. The portrait the Sorbs have of themselves has long since been homogenized into one of a rural people (*Bauernvolk*). It also has always been claimed that there are not many Sorbian intellectuals who can contribute to the progressive development of the Sorbian community. Because they have no glorious past and are rather fraught with German assimilation and conquest, the Sorbs utilize the past as the nub of a counter-force against the overpowering German might. Arising in tandem with the unabated historical consciousness of subjugation, striving for their own land, Lusatia, their Slavic origin and certainly an authentic tradition has all set the tone for the Sorbian discourse. Seen in the historical context, all this is constructed in relation and opposition to the dominant group – the Germans – which imposes the framework of German nationalization on minorities in nationalist projects.

2.3.2 Traditional Sorbian Costumes as an Expression of Gendered Tradition

In the Sorbian discourse on tradition, traditional costumes have been seen as one of the most important repositories for locating the authenticity inherent in Sorbian-ness. However, it is difficult to understand an abstract spiritual value that is imbued with the feeling of authenticity, and people therefore need something concrete to symbolize it with (Bendix 1994: 59; Breidenbach & Zukrigl 2000: 183). In the field of tradition, these concrete things are those which reify the voiced "we-ness" embedded in a common heritage of symbolic forms and which voice the "past-ness" of an ethnic group or a nation. These things therefore include customs, most of which have to do with religious feasts and seasonal ceremonies. In the case of the Sorbs, in addition to the most well-known celebrations and rituals around Easter, such as Easter Riding and the decoration of Easter eggs, Sorbian folksongs and oral narratives also express cultural identity. Furthermore, artifacts such as traditional Sorbian costumes, Sorbian wedding food (particularly the wedding soup and the main course) are also believed to demonstrate cultural inheritance. In my view, however, among these traditions and customs, traditional costumes best demonstrate the construction of "Sorbian-ness" as an overt signal. Moreover, in the process of establishing traditional costumes as "Sorbian", women as the wearers of traditional costumes are integrated into the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects, where they are constructed as "the mothers of the nation" – "*serbska mać*" (Sorbian mother)[95]. In this sense, Sorbian women are obliged to serve as cultural representatives. As a result, traditional Sorbian costumes can therefore be deemed as an expression of gendered tradition in the case of the Sorbs. Before I deal with this process in which traditional costumes are used for erecting an imagined Sorbian community, an investigation into the locus of dress and traditional costumes denoting ethnicity and ethnic identity is in order.

[95] See Chapter 2.2.3.

As German folklorist Claudia Schöning-Kalender points out, dress denotes a certain significance: "Dress is one of those cultural signs that appears at first sight and conveys meaning in many different ways. Dress marks boundaries" [96](2000: 187). As a cultural phenomenon, dress serves as a hinge of inclusion and exclusion in as much as it is a visual marker that encloses an individual in a certain group while simultaneously distinguishing the same person from others. Through the characteristic inherent in its immediate and direct visual communication, dress indicates one's social position and symbolizes one's economic status. Moreover, as a form of visible identification and signification, dress is considered to be the textile medium that borders, or marks boundaries, and even also removes barriers (Nixdorff 1999). In other words, dress is a "compelling reminder of the human dependency on, or acknowledgment of, boundaries – to reject or confront them – for the purpose of self-construction, and thereby constitutes the mechanics of cultural identity and the crystallization of one's ethnicity" (Tulloch 2004: 117). In addition to these features, as American textile scholars Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher point out in their co-edited book *Dress and Gender*, " […] attributes of identity as related to the social positions held by an individual are all affected by the gender identification of the dressed person" (1997: 2). As the various studies in *Dress and Ethnicity*, edited by Joanne B. Eicher (1995), show, the focus of dress history research is frequently on women's dress. Moreover, in the German context, the construction of traditional costumes is gendered. For example, women were educated to be economical with textile in the national ideology in the era of Enlightenment and mercantilism; in early women's magazines, only female "German outfits" stood in the center of discussion. Girls and women who did not dress themselves properly for certain traditional ceremonies were portrayed as destroyers of customs in literature and pamphlets (Keller-Dresher 2003: 33). In the case of the Sorbs, traditional Sorbian women's dress has also always been the focal point of research and Sorbian cultural discourse, while traditional Sorbian men's costumes have only existed in fragmentary form since industrialization in the 19th century (Pawlikowa 2008: 113, footnote 3). Therefore, I have chosen traditional Sorbian dress as a fundamental key to unlock the multiple meanings of gender and ethnicity that will reveal how the idea of tradition is perceived in the Sorbian discourse.

Before I further discuss how dress becomes an expression of identity, it is necessary to define some terms with regard to traditional dress. In English-speaking literature, such as *Folk Dress in Europe and Anatolia. Beliefs about Protection and Fertility* (1999) edited by Linda Welters, Professor of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design Department at the University of Rhode Island, folk dress is used as a general term for traditional dress. It is variously called peasant, rural, ethnic or regional dress, and widely received as a term to denote "the traditional dress worn by people outside urban areas" (1999: 3). As Welters further notes, folk dress is sometimes associated with non-Western dress, as it has developed outside the sphere of the Western European fashion system. However, current conceptualizations of folk dress have been expanded to embrace "the notion of a folk group's being any group with its own culture" (ibid.). By referring to K.E. Wilson (1997), Welters defines folk dress as "any manner of stylizing,

[96] Cf. Kleidung gehört zu den kulturellen Zeichen, die auf den ersten Blick wirken und in vielfältiger Weise Bedeutung transportieren. Kleidung markiert Grenzen.

marking, or manipulating the appearance of the human body with culturally understood symbols and forms" (ibid.). Notably, dress is preferred to costume because the latter suggests images of costumes connected to festivals, theater or stage occasions, or historical ensembles; furthermore, costume is the ideal term only if it is premised that cultural groups appropriate an ensemble as part of performance (ibid.). Welters elaborates on the term of folk dress, while Joanne B. Eicher specifies the definition of "ethnic dress" for us in the introduction of the aforementioned book:

> Dress is a coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human interaction in space and time. The codes of dress include visual as well as other sensory modifications (taste, smell, sound, and feel) and supplements (garments, jewelry and accessories) to the body which set off either or both cognitive and affective processes that result in recognition or lack of recognition by the viewer. As a system, dressing the body by modifications and supplements often does facilitate or hinder consequent verbal or other communication. The body modifications and supplements that mark the ethnic identity of an individual are ethnic dress. (1995: 1)

Eicher sums up that dress functions as an obviously perceptible demarcation between wearers and viewers. This implies a conterminous feature of ethnic identity: self-ascription and attribution by others. This also reveals ethnic dress as a form of ethnic demarcation.

In addition to the above definitions of folk dress in English-speaking literature, in my view, it is necessary to introduce the term of folk dress in the German context and in the study of traditional costumes in the 19th and 20th century in German-speaking Europe to better establish a more elaborative view on the construction of peasant dress as traditional and national costume. The German equivalent of folk dress is "*Tracht*", which stems from the Old High German *traht(a)*, Middle Lower German *dracht*, meaning "something that is worn"[97]. "*Tracht*" translates as "traditional or national costume", or "folk dress". Traditional costume is a creation of the cultural consciousness of the past two centuries: The intellectually constructed folk culture is unmistakably defined as peasant-based and is regarded as having the inherent traits of purity and genuineness by the feudal nobility, the European bourgeoisie and also by folklore studies in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, which glorified rural life, celebrated farming communities and safeguarded the continuity of archaic and primordial cultural forms (Brückner 1995: 8). The elites were in search of an authenticity that was assumed to be in the folk culture of the ordinary people. Peasant dress offers an ideal locus for this, particularly in the era of Romanticism, when peasant dress was constructed as a timeless expression of an unchanging way of life (Keller-Dresher 2003: 29).

Along with tradition and customs, peasant folk's dress was an embodiment of regional materials, cuts, colors and mentalities and visualized social difference, among others, the contrast between the rural regions and cities (Kaschuba 1999: 227). Peasant dress thus marked a social distinction, as it recorded the aura of rurality; it also symbolized regional characteristics and served as a proof of regional identity, especially

[97] See Klug's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.

during the 19th century, and the flourishing establishment of associations in which the traditional folk dress lent a hand in making peasant dress an indicator of regional identity (Kaschuba 1999: 227f.). The founder of the academic discipline *Volkskunde*, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, and his contemporaries called the peasant dress "*Tracht*", and "*Tracht*" became a rhetoric means in the political discourse for German nation-building in the 19th century (Keller-Dresher 2003: 29f.). In this sense, it can be asserted that "*Tracht*" is constructed as a symbol of national entity and cultural identity for the German people/*Volk*.

This is also the case with the Sorbs in terms of constructing regional, peasant dress as traditional "Sorbian" costumes or "*Trachten*". As already mentioned earlier, traditional Sorbian costumes are believed to be one of the essential elements that constitute Sorbian identity. Such thinking is part and parcel of a general, commonsense understanding of ethnicity in the Sorbian context. The repeated emphasis on Sorbian traditional costumes in the Sorbian newspaper and its frequent appearance in tourist brochures and information pamphlets conveys a significant symbolic meaning for exhibiting Sorbian-ness. However, the process in which traditional costumes play an important role in the construction of the Sorbs as a *Volk* is accompanied by the folklorization of the traditional Sorbian costumes, as can be seen in the following: "The Sorbs maintain the living customs and traditional way of life. The visible expression is the traditional costumes [98] (Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, February 27, 1999, quoted in Tschernokoshewa 2000: 53). This renders "*Trachtenfolklorismus*" (traditional costume folklore) visible in the case of the Sorbs. As German folklorist and German studies scholar Wolfgang Brückner suggests, traditional costumes and folklore cannot be separated from each other at all in that traditional costumes are usually connected to "folkloristic", i.e. when we think of traditional costumes, we associate it with colorful dance shows or processions (Brückner 1995: 8). This is because there are "no longer" so-called "real" traditional costumes or "vivid" costume-wearing as a social everyday reality; rather we get a view of traditional costumes in the context of identifiable national spirit, cultural historical museums, omnipresent advertisements, gift associations and celebration organizers (ibid.). In terms of "*Trachtenfolklorismus*", Brückner has formulated two theses (1987: 18f.). Firstly, from when it began in the first half of the 19th century onward, "*Trachtenfolklorismus*" has been a part of public consciousness and historicism and has developed in the form of the parade. Up to today, historical dressing-up always goes hand in hand with traditional clothing. Only by donning these clothes can the ennoblement of the carnival robes of the once royal farmer wedding and later civic peasant ball succeed in a national and regional emblemization. Traditional costumes have become uniforms (1987: 18). Secondly, in a stricter sense, traditional costumes are understood as rural clothes that have been influenced by a certain culture (1987: 19, see also Böth 2001: 221f.). Traditional costumes, or peasant dress, are real, observable, social phenomena that are simultaneously valued simply through selective, interpretive, stressed and stylized artistic popularization; they have received a new cultural quality and undergone aesthetic reforming (1987: 19). The folklorization of traditional costumes connotes that the colorful and beautiful folk dress is actually a commodity of the culture industry in

[98] Cf. Die Sorben bewahren lebendiges Brauchtum und althergebrachte Lebensweise. Sichtbarer Ausdruck ist die traditionelle Tracht.

consumer society. However, it also reveals that traditional costumes which were thought to be natural givens in customs and traditions are "invented". It is believed that the traditional costumes that denote folkness are not only "real" and "original", but also made more beautiful through the historical "past" and "antiquity".

The Sorbs accord their traditional costumes much importance, as they function as a visible symbol for Sorbian-ness. However, this courts the danger of substantializing and homogenizing the Sorbs themselves. Simultaneously the Sorbs are easily fixed as a pre-modern people in the gaze of outside viewers. Particularly those women who are the wearers of the Sorbian traditional costumes are straightforwardly perceived as the cultural representative of the Sorbs, as if they live in a primordial life world. Their motivation and intention for wearing clothes in Sorbian way, and the handling of their traditional costumes are passed over as unremarkable. German folklore studies expert Brunhilde Miehe, however, breaks new ground in her research on Sorbian traditional dress in her *Der Tracht treu geblieben. Studien zum regionalen Kleidungsverhalten in der Lausitz* (Staying True to the Traditional Costume. Studies of the Regional Dress Practices of Lusatia) (2003). In 32 case studies[99] gathered from 1997 to 2002, Miehe elaborately analyzes the reason why traditional dress is still worn in Lusatia, while it is not worn in the other regions. She takes the geographic, traffic, political, economic, social and religious circumstances into consideration, so that the social milieu can be better understood as background material. Moreover, emphasis is placed on delving into the factors that contribute to the "we-feeling" and the code of norm and tradition. One very important thing has to be mentioned here: This book brings new insight into the study of traditional dress, something which is an old and favorite staple in the discipline of ethnology. Miehe has taken stock of how Sorbian women treat ethnic dress and takes the interdependence of time and space into account in this study. Notably, she delicately explores the dynamic process of living with traditional dress for one individual during the course of her life. Meihe's study depicts women as subjects and takes the wearing of traditional costumes as the research topic.[100] By giving fresh relevance to the research of traditional Sorbian dress, in my view, Miehe echos strongly with Susanne Hose (1995), who criticized folklore studies investigations of women in the Sorbian academic community in which they are treated as "objects" or "specimens" (*Objektträgerinnen*) (1995: 341). In Hose's opinion, notwithstanding the intensive

[99] Among these 32 case studies, 24 women wear traditional costumes, and the other eight researched (including six women, one man, one couple) are involved in the making of traditional Sorbian costumes. There are two dressmakers (one of them dresses in the Sorbian way herself on particular occasions, e.g. for *Fastnacht* (carnival)), dress helpers, two owners of a store for traditional Sorbian costumes and souvenirs, two embroiderers (one of them dresses in the Sorbian way as shown in the photograph, but Miehe does not tell us if this embroiderer wears Sorbian costumes everyday or only on particular occasion), one textile designer (specialized in *Blaudruck*) and one clog maker.

[100] See also several studies of German ethnologist Helga Hager which focus on the relationship of the wearers and their clothing, among others, in her *Hochzeitskleidung – Biographie, Körper und Geschlecht* (Wedding Dress – Biography, Body and Gender) (1999) based on the case studies that she conducted in three villages in Württemberg, Germany. She investigates the wearers' personal relationship to their wedding dresses and how they deal with them. The wedding dress is considered to be a medium through which actual, multiple life stories are told. Additionally, women in Appenzell Innerrhoden, Switzerland, were also interviewed as a case study by Brigit Langenegger (2006), who has similarly delved into the direct relationship between women and dressing in a traditional way as well as how they deal with traditional dress. In her study, the women's motives for, experiences with and perceptions of wearing traditional dress are central themes.

research on the traditional dress in the field of Sorbian folklore studies, e.g. *Sorbische Volktrachten* (Sorbian Folk Dress, 5 volumes, 1976~1987), the gender-specific structure of dress has not been explored. Furthermore, the names of the wearers, their motives for wearing ethnic dress and the connection between the traditional clothing practices and their lives remain unknown and under-researched. Instead, the subject of traditional costumes and relevant questions such as decoration and technical details take center stage in these studies, while the wearers and the producers appear in an accessorial way.

Along with the costume-wearers' experiences in dealing with their traditional costumes, Miehe also outlines fundamental information on Sorbian costumes and the process in which the regional rural dress becomes "Sorbian". According to Miehe, there are currently about 450 Sorbian/Wendish wearers of traditional costumes in Lusatia. Between Bautzen in Upper Lusatia and Cottbus in Lower Lusatia, there are four regions where women, most of whom are older, dress more or less in traditional Sorbian/Wendish everyday wear. The four regions of traditional dress are as follows:

1) The Catholic Sorbian region of Upper Lusatia which includes 70 German-Sorbian villages between Bautzen, Kamenz and Hoyerswerda where the wearers are the most predominant in number and are also the youngest in Lusatia. This region is characterized by its relative uniform traditional dress because of denominational ties. The traditional dress is the farmer's dress, worn only by Catholic Sorbian women. Ostensibly the dress practice here is homogenous, and it only underwent negligible change and insignificant renovation. Additionally, dress functions as a medium through which the social class and financial status distinguish between the prosperous and the less fortunate farmers. In the Catholic Sorbian region, the Sorbian-national attempt has been considerably more intensive than in other areas of traditional dress in Lusatia. The binary taxonomy between "Sorbian" and "German" is thus polarized. Consequently the wearers here describe their clothing as Sorbian, or as Catholic Sorbian, or as "*Bekenntnistracht*" (traditional costume as a sign of one's denomination) (2003: 19). It should be concluded that because of the Sorbian national movement and the strong religious influence, the traditional dress originally meant for farmers has overlapped with the Sorbian consciousness.

2) The Hoyerswerda region, which borders on the Catholic Sorbian area in the south and the Schleife region in the northeast. At the beginning of the 20th century, the development of the opencast mines for brown coal altered the scenery of traditional garments here. As indicated earlier (see Chapter 2.1.3), industrialization had a great impact on the social structure of the mining areas, where the local male inhabitants worked as miners and farming became their second job. Hence, most of the farming work was left to women who continued wearing traditional rural dress. Since the Second World War, more and more women stopped wearing traditional attire. The Sorbian women call their dress "Wendish dress" or "farmer's dress", and it was not until after the war that the characterization of "Sorbian dress" became established.

3) Schleife, the smallest traditional-dress district in Lusatia, extends over only 7 villages of the Schleife region which is located in the sparse settlement area at the edge of Muskau Heath. A relative independent and unique cultural life has developed here. At the end of the 19th century, the introduction of the mining and glass industry caused the women to replace their ethnic dress with the so-called "*halbdeutsche*" (semi-German) dress, which combines semi-urban and semi-middle-class dress. Significantly,

girls who worked at the glassworks tended to wear such dress. This kind of dress was, however, not predominant. After the First World War, only few girls dressed this way, while most still dressed traditionally. Furthermore, semi-German clothes were considered to be a reaction to the exercise of social control. Up until the 1920s, Sorbian women who moved to Schleife due to marriage at least had to dress in the semi-German way in order to be accepted by the village dwellers and to be integrated into the village community (Miehe2003: 110; Ratajczak 2004: 67).

4) In Lower Lusatia, the area spreading from Lübben to River Neiße, the local traditional dress is generally categorized as "*Spreewaldtracht*" (traditional costume of Spreewald). Since the middle of the 19th century, the train route from Berlin to Görlitz (1866), Lübbenau to Kamenz (1874), and Lünnen to Cottbus (1899) brought numerous tourists to the Spreewald region of Lower Lusatia. Most of the tourists were city dwellers seeking relaxation, recreation and romantic tranquility here. Tourism thus prospered. Among other things, traditional dress was an attraction for tourists. For this reason, the "*Spreewaldtracht*" served as a means of representing, advertising and marketing the Wendish culture, cuisine and scenery.

As Miehe points out, the traditional Sorbian costumes are originally farmers' dress, but its function later became intertwined with customs, religious rituals and processions. Primarily in the Catholic Sorbian Upper Lusatia, the religious customs not only demonstrate the piety of the faithful, but they also display their Sorbian-ness. A sense of belonging and community spirit therefore ensue. In this religious setting, traditional dress plays an important role. Some priests place much emphasis on girls and women wearing festive church dress. The clergy even launched a campaign in 1882 that aimed to preserve the traditional costume of the *družka* (bridesmaid) (Miehe 2003: 180). Traditional costumes have played a part in the conservation of the religious and national life of the Sorbs (ibid.). In sum, traditional Sorbian costumes and their female wearers have had much significance in the religious and national life of the Sorbs. This is also to say that Sorbian girls and women are not only the wearers of traditional costumes, but are also the bearers of customs and traditions. Women are therefore "loaded" with the responsibility of representing Sorbian-ness and Catholicism. In this sense, the dressed female body becomes the repository of group identity. In the meantime, the idea of the dressed body in the Sorbian context generates a compulsory conformity and adaptation of women. For instance, in some particular customs such as *Maibaumwerfen* (felling the maypole), unitary costumes are much desired, and girls who normally wear urban clothing have to put on the traditional Sorbian dress, or else they do not participate in such ceremonies. In this example, clothing functions as a mechanism of integration – those who do not adapt to the dress code are excluded as outsiders. To some degree, this also implies social control over those who do not choose to wear traditional costumes. Here, ethnic dress draws the line between inclusion in and exclusion from one group. The internalization of toeing the social line and the power of a long-established dress practice exercise an influence on women's decision about whether to dress in traditional way; on the other hand, the opinions of their spouses also militate in favor of choosing a certain way of dressing. For example, one of Miehe's informants, Magdalena Boh, born in Neustadt in the Hoyerswerda region in 1912, continues to dress traditionally partly because her husband (who died in 1997) set great store by her dressing "properly" in Sorbian dress. This case reveals a gendered

connotation of wearing traditional dress – the husband's attitude affects the way their wives dress.

Men can persuade women to dress in a Sorbian way, but as the other cases show, they can also persuade women to wear German clothing. This happened particularly to those born before 1930. Ratajczak (2004: 87) cites an example for us: Before paying a forthcoming visit to a German region, where Sorbs were unknown, a Sorbian woman was asked by her male family members – her husband or brother(s) – not to dress in the Sorbian way, but rather in the German way. She responded by putting one hat on top of the other. She was not even aware that she had made a mistake, which made her a laughing stock and simultaneously disgraced the men who demanded she wear German garments. In Ratajczak's account, this not wearing of Sorbian dress not only reveals an inter-gendered dispute regarding dress practice, but also shows a symbolic attempt to remove the difference revealed by Sorbian-ness. As noted previously, in the areas where earlier industrialization and modernization began, the conventional norm of dress tends to undergo transformation or become gradually substituted by "modern" or "German" clothes. Especially those women earning a living and who had financial independence and mobility were able to change the original way of dressing or to stop dressing traditionally. For instance, in many *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft* (hereafter *LPG*, collective farms) during the time of the *DDR*, trousers were prescribed as work clothes. Women thus took working on *LPG*s as an opportunity to change their Sorbian dress. While there were still some who kept on wearing their ethnic dress, they changed when they went to work on the farm. Consequently, in Miehe's analysis (2003: 181f.), working on an *LPG* cannot be regarded as the real reason for discarding the Sorbian outfit. Women tried to find a convincing excuse for not wearing the traditional costumes, as social control wielded strong power over them. Moreover, changing clothes was seen as breaking the norm at that time. According to Miehe, one of the real reasons women did not dress in the Sorbian way was that they did not want to be treated like museum artifacts by being observed, distinguished and photographed.

I have discussed how the act of wearing and not wearing the traditional Sorbian costumes can be perceived. These ostensibly two diametrically opposed choices – dressing and not dressing in the Sorbian way – actually follow the same logic: an essentialized dichotomy between "tradition" and "modernity". The inception of this binary taxonomy lies in the connotation of traditional dress as pre-modern and rural. However, are traditional costumes as traditional as they used to be? The following discussion on tradition as practice in social life will help us to approach the answer to this question.

2.3.3 Tradition as Social Life Practice

It is generally recognized that tradition involves and eternalizes experiences over generations, but this does not mean that tradition is totally static; rather, "it is a means of handling time and space […] these in turn being structured by recurrent social practices" (Giddens 1990: 37). The "recurrent social practices" suggest that tradition "has to be reinvented by each new generation as it takes over its cultural inheritance from those preceding it" (ibid.). In this sense, tradition is no longer defined as an attribute of cultural preservation, but is rather seen as undergoing permanent change. It

is constructed by actual social actors who redefine, reshape and integrate the quality of the past in contemporary social life (Welz 2001: 589). In the Sorbian discourse, tradition has always been valued and honored as one of the significant constituents of their culture and ethnicity. However, the following example will illustrate the very essence of "invented traditions", as tradition establishes or symbolizes a social cohesion of group members while socializing individuals to have certain beliefs, value systems and conventions of behavior (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983: 9).

As seen in the establishment of groups wearing traditional Sorbian costumes in villages, such as Horno, Wolkenberg, where Sorbian-ness was lost because of brown coal mining and forced resettlement, the Sorbian dress of these groups has an important symbolic function. In addition to having a symbolic connotation in the Sorbian context, traditional Sorbian costumes serve as a means for them to reclaim their land and identity (see Seng & Wass 1995: 232f.). In the fight against the opencast mines that took place in Horno/Rogow 1996, the Sorbian festive traditional costumes were worn in order to show that this is "Sorbian territory" (Toivanen 2001: 52). The village Horno/Rogow is located in the Region of Lower Lusatia, in the *Land* of Brandenburg. It is a German-Sorbian settlement area close to the Polish border. There are about 350 residents. 30% of the village population are re-settlers or expellees (Tschernokoshewa 2000: 174). Marked as the prime region of brown coal, Horno/Rogow was scheduled to be dredged in 2003 and the habitants were expected to start moving in April 2000. The villagers fought against the dredging of their hometown and demanded the preservation of their Sorbian space by holding demonstrations and appealing to justice (Tschernokoshewa 2000: 175). The language spoken in the village is predominately German. Only few people, mainly the elderly, speak Sorbian. Also, not very many villagers take part in the *Domowina*-group. However, notably, through the protests against dredging the village, one village movement for environmental protection has been established that espouses the cause of Sorbian-ness (ibid.). The *Domowina* takes part in justice cases against the backdrop of the law of Brandenburg 1993 ensuring the right of the Sorbian people to the protection, preservation and fostering of their national identity and their inherited settlement region.[101] This case not only depicts how traditional dress is applied to mark "Sorbian-ness", but also portrays how tradition is invented and constructed in the present.

As seen in the above example, traditional costumes as a symbol of Sorbian tradition and signifying Sorbian-ness cannot be assumed as a tradition handed down from the past, but rather as symbolically reinvented, reconstructed, reinterpreted in an ongoing present for the current needs of people living today (Handler & Linnekin 1984: 280; Welz 2000: 11). Therefore, tradition is not a natural given, rather it is a symbolic process in which interpretation is creative, and meaning is actively assigned to the past (Handler & Linnekin 1984: 286f.). Furthermore, the villagers' act of dressing themselves in a Sorbian way for the protests can be denoted, borrowing from Welz's view, as a response to contemporary challenges rather than as a mindless reproduction of past habits (2000: 11). This political utilization of traditional Sorbian costumes in the present involves a process of "reflexive traditionalization" (Welz 2000). That the

[101] Cf. Das Recht des Sorbischen Volkes auf Schutz, Erhaltung und Pflege seiner nationalen Identität und seines angestammten Siedlungsgebietes wird gewährleistet (Article 25). See also Tschernokoshewa 2000: 175.

villagers claim their "Sorbian territory" by dint of wearing Sorbian traditional costumes shows that tradition is not passively reproduced, but rather actively invented. In a word, villagers "traditionalize" the costumes intentionally for their present need in social life. In the view of an American scholar specializing in sociolinguistics, anthropology and folklore studies, Dell Hymes, tradition is not understood as a static essence and attribute handed down through centuries, but rather as a process of "traditionalizing". As he suggests,

> Let us root the notion [of tradition] not in time, but in social life. Let us postulate that the traditional is a functional prerequisite of social life. Let us consider the notion, not simply as naming objects, traditions, but also, and more fundamentally, as naming a process. (1975: 353)

For Hymes, "traditionalizing" would appear to be a universal need (ibid.). There are no groups and persons who do not "traditionalize", but the key difference between social actors – both the collective and individuals – lies in the degree, and the form of success in satisfying this universal need (ibid.). Tradition is thus rendered a need-based construction in the process in which social actors ascribe the quality of the traditional to chosen experiences and personalities on the foundation of a connection with cultural and personal values and purposes (Bendix 1997: 212).

Moreover, it is modernization that values tradition as the form and concomitant of routine daily life in pre-modern society (Bausinger 1991: 8). With the advent of modernity, people have become conscious of preserving traditions and of being traditional. This consciousness causes a reflexivity that consistently monitors humanity's actions – a "reflexive monitoring of action"[102] (Giddens 1990: 36). This is what Anthony Giddens refers to as drawing attention to human actions which includes a constant monitoring of human behavior and its contexts (Giddens 1990: 36f.). As Giddens points out, the past is honored and symbols are valued in traditional cultures because they contain and perpetuate the experience of generations (1990: 37): "Tradition is a mode of integrating the reflexive monitoring of action with the time-space organization of the community" (ibid.). For Giddens, tradition is "a means of handling time and space, which inserts any particular activity or experience within the continuity of past, present, and future, these in turn being structured by recurrent social practices" (ibid). In this light, tradition is not completely static because it is reinvented by each new generation. Notably, in the pre-modern era, people were not really aware of tradition as cultural heritage. Reflexivity is defined by the reinterpretation and elucidation of tradition in which the "past" is more heavily weighted down than the "future"; with the arrival of modernity, reflexivity now makes people "sanction a practice because it is traditional will not do; tradition can be justified but only in the light of knowledge which is not itself authenticated by tradition" (1990: 38). In other words, traditions, as social practices, are continually reviewed and reformed because we have information and knowledge about these very practices. We therefore constitutively change their character (ibid.). More significantly, villagers' political use of traditional Sorbian costumes bestows tradition with a quality of plurality, that is to

[102] See also Chapter 1.5.

say, tradition is not simply singularized as a fixed embodiment of customs and artifacts, but constructed as

> a symbolic process that both presupposes past symbolism and creatively reinterprets them. […] tradition is not a bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present though making references to the past. (Handler & Linnekin 1984: 287)

In my opinion, it is this process of interpretation that opens up the multiplicity of tradition. The action of the villagers is illustrative of an important point: The Sorbs are a modern people because they imbue Sorbian-ness with a fresh relevance by reflexively employing traditional costumes in political demonstration. But as German-speaking ethnologist Konrad Köstlin, now teaching in Vienna, reminds us, it is, however, vital to look at how the notion of Sorbian-ness inherent in the conventional definition of culture and ethnicity is understood in modernity and how Sorbian-ness is positioned in the modern world (Köstlin 2003: 438). Through these inquiries, we can apply a new approach to the definition of Sorbian-ness in a process of reflexive modernization.

2.4 The Narrative of Sorbian-ness

In the previous sections, I already discussed how an imagined Sorbian community emerged as a result of establishing the Sorbs as a "unified whole" and through writing Sorbian historiography as an ethnic and minority history through endeavors to print publications of the Sorbian language, and through capturing and locating "Sorbian-ness" in tradition. In the Sorbian discourse, history, language and tradition constitute the core of the Sorbian ethnicity. These elements are not only seen as the "natural" and "inherent" attributes of the Sorbs, but they also monopolize the definition of Sorbian-ness and Sorbian identity. In recent years, Sorbian academics and researchers of the Sorbs have made efforts to bring new insights to the understanding of the Sorbian culture, ethnicity and identity. The report *So langsam wird's Zeit. Kulturelle Perspektiven der Sorben in Deutschland* (It's about Time. Cultural Perspectives of the Sorbs in Germany) (1994), on which I will elaborate in the following, is a pertinent example of this. However, an internal dispute about the definition of Sorbian-ness arose between people advocating the conventional and widespread definition and the authors of the report. Before dealing with this debate within the Sorbian community, I would like to refer to German sociologist Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim's discussion on ethnicity, for she provides us with an insightful angle on ethnic identity in the case of the Sorbs.

In her book *Juden, Deutsche und andere Erinnerungslandschaften. Im Dschungel der ethnischen Kategorien* (Jews, Germans and Other Landscapes of Memory. In the Jungle of Ethnic Categories) from 1999, Beck-Gernsheim tries to find an escape route out of the dense forest of conventional categories of nationality and ethnicity. Notwithstanding the fact that her point of departure for this study is the idea of belonging in terms of ethnic and/or national origins, one of her main goals is to chart how people's lives are fashioned in the era of globalization. In Beck-Gernheim's view, the increasing migration, the new forms of mobility such as flight, expulsion, international economic networking, mass communication media, mass transportation,

and so forth is making it more and more complicated and difficult to classify people as belonging to a particular ethnic group or nationality. Therefore, she sets up a method of inquiry meant to identify and calibrate the meaning of national and ethnic borders in the age of transnationalism. In the process, she even broaches her initial questions of who belongs to what given group, who does not, who should be excluded, why, and who makes this decision (1999: 17). However, if we study people with backgrounds of international migration, transnational diaspora, or mixed marriages, it becomes no longer easy to draw a line between inclusion and exclusion to mark off a membership based on one's descent. For the author, it is worthwhile to delve into a life between cultures, between groups, between nationalities, and between continents. The investigation of life molded by "in-between" worlds, or spaces, traces the social construction of ethnicity and nationality.

By asking "who is Black?" in the context of racial discrimination in the United States, or "who is Jewish?" in the context of the history of National Socialism in Germany, Beck-Gernsheim's reveals the notion of a jungle of ethnic and national ascription as a conundrum for how arduous it is to establish a clear-cut identity. On the surface, the population groups being studied are the Blacks and Jews, but on closer examination, their counterparts in their surroundings, or in accurate terms, the groups with numerical and empowered predominance – Whites and non-Jews/gentiles (or Germans for the National Socialists) – are indispensable to the disadvantaged groups for their identity construction process. In the postcolonial discourse of identification processes, the relation to the Other and the formation of the Self through the look of the Other[103] occupy a major place. The fact that, in each confrontation with the Other, identity becomes shaped anew and thus varies explicates the difficulty of circumscribing one's identity in simple terms of Black and White. In other words, identification is a process that is never completed.

2.4.1 An Internal Debate about the Definition of Sorbian-ness

As Beck-Gernsheim shows us in the preceding, calibrating a clear-cut identity is an arduous task, which is the case with ethnicity. Taking the Sorbs as an example, the objective is not to draw an easily identifiable line between the Sorbs and the non-Sorbs, or the "real" Sorbs and the "not real" Sorbs. Rather, it is important to inquire as to how, why, when, and for whom the idea of Sorbian-ness is used (see Tschernokoshewa 1995). Nonetheless, essentialist linear views on ethnic identity and ethnicity are widespread. The commonly received criteria for the definition of Sorbian ethnicity rely on four pillars: 1) a shared history (especially ancestry); 2) customs and traditional costumes; 3) language; 4) religion (particularly Catholicism) (Tschernokoshewa 1995: 107). In agreement with Tschernokoshewa, this is to say that these conventional criteria establish a fixed image in which Sorbian-ness, as a unity of ancestry, family, language, customs, tradition and religion, is turned into a counter-image of modern life (1995: 108). Such circumscription, which some people utilize as a strategy for protecting Sorbian culture from dying out, or as a symbolic withdrawal into the "stable" past in order to (not) face the "changing" future that is full of uncertainty, is exemplified by

[103] See Chapter 1.2 for a discussion on theory.

establishing a "Sorbian family" composed of "real Sorbs". This creates a stigmatized image of a Sorbian-ness that is static and ahistorical. Furthermore, the application of these deterministic concepts monopolizes the definition of Sorbian-ness, and a built-in mechanism of exclusion controls what Sorbian-ness is and should be (1995: 110).

Within the Sorbian community, there is a debate about the definition of Sorbian ethnicity and Sorbian culture. Some Sorbs enclose themselves within the concept of Sorbian-ness by retaining the idea that Sorbian ethnicity is culturally bound, while others distance themselves from the stigma created by the common discourse on the conceptualization of ethnicity and culture of the Sorbs. For instance, we find the statement that "the Sorbs are those who feel they are Sorbs or who work and participate in Sorbian institutions" [104] clearly asserted in the report *So langsam wird's Zeit. Kulturelle Perspektiven der Sorben in Deutschland*, published in 1994 by an independent Structural Commission supervised by Elka Tschernokoshewa, Head of the Department of Empirical Cultural Research/Ethnography of The Sorbian Institute in Bautzen on behalf of the *Stiftung für das sorbische Volk* (The Foundation for the Sorbian People).

Such a declaration stands in diametrical opposition to the *vox populi*, however. A letter to the editor in the Upper Sorbian newspaper *Serbske Nowiny* from August 26, 1994[105] contrasts with the perspectives of the commission. The writer of the letter doubts that "[…] a German, a Turk, an American can be a Sorb because he feels Sorbian without any knowledge of the Sorbian language, culture and behaviors.[…] It doesn't matter whether you're German, Bulgarian or from somewhere else. From now on, everybody is Sorb. […] Absurd."[106] Moreover, the writer thinks it is ridiculous to define someone as Sorbian if they work in a Sorbian institution. Another newspaper reader's response shares much in common with this idea: "I am not German, although I speak good German. I ask you: How can a non-Sorb be in charge of the Sorbian Institute? The administration of such academic Sorbian institutions should be managed with a Sorbian heart, a sense of Sorbian identity, and Sorbian optimism" [107] (*Serbske Nowiny*, August 27, 1993, quoted in Tschernokoshewa 1995: 110). One of the commission members, Dieter Kramer, responded to the first reader by describing ethnic identity as emerging from self-ascription and attribution by others, making it situational and dynamic. In the dense forest of definitions of ethnicity, this is the most widely recognized in the fields of cultural inquiry. As to the second definition (people who work in Sorbian organizations are Sorbs), Kramer says that the report *So langsam wird's Zeit* in its entirety acknowledges that cultural autonomy is a process in which vividness, development, and the recognition of "institutions" in the broadest sense are of importance.

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[104] Cf. Sorb ist, wer sich als solcher fühlt oder in einer sorbischen Organisation betätigt (1994: 26).

[105] See Appendix in *So langsam wird's Zeit*: *Erste Diskussionsbeiträge zum Bericht der Strukturkommission* (The first discussion on the report of the structure committee).

[106] Cf. […] kann jeder Deutsche, Türke, Amerikaner.[…], der sich so fühlt – ohne Kenntnis sorbischer Sprache, Kultur und Verhaltens – per Definition Sorbe sein. [...]Egal. Ob Deutscher, Bulgare oder sonst wer, von jetzt an sind alle Sorben….Absurd.

[107] Cf. Ich bin auch kein Deutscher, obwohl ich gutes Deutsch spreche. Und hier frage ich: Wie kann ein Nichtsorbe das Sorbische Institut leiten? Die Leitung solcher Wissenschaftler Sorbischer Institutionen muss eine Leitung mit sorbischem herz, mit sorbischem Selbstbewusstsein und mit sorbischem Optimismus sein.

In the preface to the report, Tschernokoshewa, who is in charge of the report, identifies such opposing views as those illustrated in the two readers' letters as positive and democratic because public debate connotes a revising of one's own standpoint, of reforms and of preserving the vitality of the Sorbian people (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 13). Tschernokoshewa also points out that such contrasting perspectives renders internal difference and different groups within the Sorbs visible in her essay "Bilder von uns – für die anderen" (Images of Us – for the Others) from 1995 (1995: 110). However, she also significantly believes that this has to do with the political atmosphere after the Reunification of Germany: the distribution- and power struggles for acquiring and ensuring privileges, resources and spheres of influence after the collapse of socialism (ibid.). Therefore, such an internal debate about the definition of Sorb and Sorbian-ness can be interpreted as something positive for the Sorbs on the one hand. On the other hand, this divergent argument also reflects a competition for resources and conflict between those in power in the era of Socialism and those after-the-Reunification "newcomers" who accord openness and innovation primacy.

2.4.2 *So langsam wird's Zeit*: Cultural Perspectives of the Sorbs

2.4.2.1 Promoting Sorbian Culture: Aims, Approaches and Measures

In June 1993, The Foundation for the Sorbian People commissioned Elka Tschernokoshewa and the Structural Commission [108] to investigate the existing structures within Sorbian culture (*So Langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 11). The publication of the report *So Langsam wird's Zeit* is contextualized in the Reunification of Germany. According to Article 38 of the *Einigungsvertrag* (unification treaty) between the *BRD* and *DDR*, it should be evaluated whether the former *DDR* academic institutions (including the *Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR*, the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic) fit in the common research structure of the Federal Republic of Germany (Wissenschaftsrat 1992: 9). This evaluation that was carried out by an independent commission (*Wissenschaftsrat*) was mainly concerned with whether the former East German research institutes deserved financial support. According to the evaluation statements on the former East German academic institutions outside the university system passed on July 5, 1991, the *Institut für sorbische Volksforschung* (The Sorbian Ethnological Institute, hereafter *ISV*, founded in 1951, from 1952 to 1991 appended to *Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR*, today known as The Sorbian Institute established on January 1, 1992[109]) was the only institute in the field of human

[108] The other 11 members are as follows: Ludwig Elle (researcher in cultural scholarship, The Sorbian Institute, Buatzen), Cyrill Kola (researcher in cultural scholarship, publicist, Bautzen), Dieter Kramer (researcher in cultural studies, senior curator of *Museum für Volkskunde*, Frankfurt am Main, lecturer, Dept. of European Ethnology, Vienna University) Jurij Krawža (researcher in cultural studies, writer, Bautzen), Jan Malink (priest, publicist, Bautzen), Hans Mirtschin (curator of historical monuments, *Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde des Landratsamtes Bautzen*), Maria Mirtschin (art historian, The Sorbian Institute, Bautzen), Dieter Scholze (researcher in literary studies, director of The Sorbian Institute, Bautzen), Martin Völkel (researcher in literary studies, journalist, The Sorbian Institute, Bautzen), Martin Walde (researcher in cultural studies, The Sorbian Institute, Bautzen), and Andreas J. Wiesand (researcher in political science and cultural studies, director of the *Zentrum für Kulturforschung* (Center for Culture Studies), Bonn, Berlin, Vienna.

[109] The Sorbian Institute situated in Bautzen, with its branch in Cottbus, was established by the Free State

science outside the university system that was not closed. After the Reunification, *ISV* itself also proposed a new direction of further development in research on the Sorbs. The establishment of The Sorbian Institute, whose research not only continued to follow the line set up by *ISV* (all aspects of Sorbian culture, language and history) but which has also added comparative minority studies in Europe, marks this shift. In order to improve the planning, assessment and the qualitative control of the academic work of the *ISV*, the *Wissenschaftsrat* recommended that the *ISV* should set up a *Wissenschaftlicher Beirat*[110] (academic advisory board) and this *Wissenschaftlicher Beirat* ought to assess the work planning and research achievement of the *ISV* (*Wissenschaftsrat* 1992: 187). The *ISV* should also draw up a written report every two or three years.[111] In addition to the above context, the preface of *So Langsam wird's Zeit* introduced by Ludmila Budar, the chairperson of the Council of The Foundation for the Sorbian People, also offers a the background against which *So Langsam wird's Zeit* appeared. As she put it, "It was one important interest of the Council of the Foundation to investigate and work out recommendations for the existing structures within Sorbian culture […], in order to guarantee the greatest possible continuity and foresightedness of further (financial) supportive measures in accordance with the principles of The Foundation for the Sorbian People" (*So Langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 11).[112]

The report *So Langsam wird's Zeit* is the outcome of an open-ended stock-taking and analysis of the current developments of Sorbian culture and the recommendations, suggestions and solutions for Sorbian cultural development made by an independent commission composed of various important Sorbian intellectuals and academics working in Sorbian studies (1994: 47). The report *So Langsam wird's Zeit* can be seen as an attempt by Sorbian intellectuals and academics working in Sorbian studies to provide a basis for a discussion on Sorbian culture. Openness, pluralism, innovation, and potential are underscored as standing in opposition to conservative, unitary views

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of Saxony and the State of Brandenburg as a registered society.

[110] According to the *Wissenschaftsrat*, the *Wissenschaftlicher Beirat* of *ISV* should include 5 to 7 external experts and include at least two foreign academics. It should be taken into consideration that these experts' professions should be in accordance with the research fields of *ISV* (Slavonic studies, Sorbian studies, philology, literature, history, and ethnology). The responsibilities of the *Wissenschaftlicher Beirat* are: providing specialist consultation for the institute management in all academic affairs; assessment of the work planning and academic performances of *ISV*; participation in the appointment procedure of academic staff and the director of the institute (Wissenschaftsrat 1992: 187). The current members of the *Wissenschaftlicher Beirat* are Bernard Comrie (the chairperson, Leipzig/Santa Barbara), Silke Göttsch-Elten (University of Kiel), Gabriela Kiliánová (Slovakian Academy of Sciences, Bratislava), Konrad Köstlin (University of Vienna), Tadeusz Lewaszkiewicz (University of Poznań), Roland Marti (University of Saarbrücken), Winfried Müller (Technische Universität Dresden/Technical University of Dresden), Christian Prunitsch (Technische Universität Dresden/Technical University of Dresden) and Hartmut Zwahr (University of Leipzig). Konrad Köstlin is not only a member of *Wissenschaftlicher Beirat*, but also of the Sorbian Institute and the Kuratorium (Governing Body). He plays an important role in supporting the innovative and progressive interpretation of the Sorbian culture. My thanks to Gisela Welz for reminding me of this point.

[111] This written report *Tätigkeitsbericht/Dźěłowa rozprawa/Źěłowa rozpšawa* (progress report) has been published since 1999. Until now The Sorbian Institute has drawn up six reports, respectively in 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

[112] Cf. Ein wichtiges Anliegen des Stiftungsrates war es, die vorhandenen Strukturen innerhalb der sorbischen Kultur, d.h. alle Lebens- und Geistesformen und ihre Wechselbeziehungen untereinander, zu untersuchen und Empfehlungen erarbeiten zu lassen, um größtmögliche Kontinuität und Vorauschaubarkeit bei weiteren Fördermaßnahmen gemäß den Grundsätzen der Stiftung für das sorbische Volk zu gewährleisten.

of Sorbian culture that stress "boundedness" and homogeneity.

As Tschernokoshewa states on the Foundation's behalf in the preface, the report strives to establish a general concept of Sorbian culture. Meanwhile, it is important to all the commission members to not only carefully delve into various fields of Sorbian culture and different cultural institutions of the Sorbs, but to also make clear that the research outcomes are based on empirical practices, which means that today's Sorbian culture is a living, complicated, and open configuration. In this report, the case of the Sorbs is analyzed against the backdrop of a checkered history of the Sorbian people/*Volk* and in comparison to other minority groups in Europe. Furthermore, it also stresses that the discussion of the Sorbs as a Slavic minority in Germany is part of the broader discourse on cultural difference, the idea of "Self" and "Other", and self-discovery. Self-discovery is the basis for self-confidence, as is the readiness to encounter and enter into a dialogue and get along with other groups peacefully. In her conclusion of the foreword, Tschernokoshewa indicates that Foundation members intend for the notion of Sorbian culture provided in the report to provide the groundwork for discussion. It is utilized by the commission and Sorbian and German institutions as a basis for cultural political assessment and decision-making. Elsewhere, it provides impetus for further debates on the topics mentioned.

As was noted at the beginning of this report, Sorbian culture – to borrow from Herman Bausinger – is conceptualized a strategy of *Lebensbewältigung* (coping with life). Bausinger thereby exposes the term "culture" as an attempt to search for the Self within and with which people transport ideas of a good and proper life to the thoughts and actions of everyday life.[113]

According to this meaning of culture, the context of the development of Sorbian culture follows the goals the Sorbs set for their cultural activities in day-to-day life. The issue of how these activities get promoted in a cultural sense also has relevance in this respect. In the report, the commission proposed twelve points to promote Sorbian cultural work.[114] Moreover, the commission elucidated the structure of and measures for the promotion of Sorbian culture. [115] It is, however, important and necessary to look at these two parts together, so that we can understand more thoroughly and completely the direction, the aims, the approaches and the cultural strategy that have been employed for the promotion of the Sorbian culture.

According to the commission, first and foremost it is necessary and legitimate to promote Sorbian culture as a minority culture in Germany. The Foundation for the Sorbian People was the first of its kind to be established and recognized by the federal and state government authorities.[116] At the same time, for the purpose of cultural policy development, the autonomy of the Sorbs culture and cultural policy in Germany should

[113] Cf. Kultur hat immer etwas zu tun mit den Suchbewegungen, in und mit denen Menschen ihre Vorstellung vom guten und richtigen Leben in Alltagsdenken und – handeln übersetzen.

[114] See the report pp. 21-23. For my analysis, I do not discuss them in the original order as listed in the report, but rather combine them according to the relevant context, for example, I discuss point (1) together with point (12), (2) with (3), (4) with (7), (6) with (9), and (5) together with (11).

[115] This part is mainly drawn from the summary of the report, pp. 24-46.

[116] Cf. Es ist notwendig und legitim, die sorbische Kultur als Kultur einer kleinen Volksgruppe in Deutschland zu fördern. Die Gründung einer „**Stiftung für das sorbische Volk**" war erstes Zeichen dafür, dass Bund und Länder dies anerkennen (emphasis Tschernokoshewa's) (1994: 21). See also the excerpts of the report in English and French version (1997: 19).

be ensured, as is the case with other ethnic groups and language minorities in Europe, including German-speaking minorities.[117] Furthermore, premised on a culture created by democratic structures, the development of a self-awareness of culture is one of the key points for the progress of culture (1994: 24). As a minority in a democratic and pluralistic society, the Sorbs are continually re-defined and re-articulated. The discussion on culture, ethnicity, and multiculturalism is a prerequisite for these processes. In order to optimize the capacity for offering advice and suggestions and the capacity for promoting a structure for basic culture, the Sorbian institutions, including the Sorbian Institute, the national organization *Domowina*, the Foundation for the Sorbian People, and so forth, have been established. The commission conducts an inspection of each organization's structure and its tasks and responsibility, and it proposes an appropriate reform when necessary.

The next step toward promoting Sorbian culture is to strengthen the vitality of Sorbian culture which constitutes the nub of cultural activities and is the most important objective to attain.[118] As analyzed in the preceding section, Sorbian tradition is constructed as a marker of Sorbian-ness in the Sorbian discourse, enabling Sorbs to distinguish themselves from others, particularly the dominant Germans. In overemphasizing the preservation and the fostering of Sorbian culture and tradition that are deemed as the embodiment of Sorbian-ness inherent in cultural traits handed down unchanged through time, Sorbian culture is rendered as a static and fixed essence, rather than a culture of everyday life. Therefore, the commission believes it is important to propose the concept of vitality in Sorbian culture and to integrate the reinforcement of vitality of Sorbian culture as a part of the life and interests of the Sorbian people. In the view of the commission, only in this way can Germans and Sorbs live together in a mutual exchange in Lusatia. In this sense, a sense of identification with the Sorbian language and culture is a goal set to be achieved and made possible in the future. Moreover, it is essential to develop broad and vivid cultural activities in the region where the Sorbs live, noting here too that it is necessarily to have a dialogue between Sorbs, Germans and people from neighboring countries. The above aim is accorded primacy in the promotion of Sorbian culture, therefore public funds ought to be employed chiefly for this purpose. Furthermore, it is also important to take German and international laws on the promotion of cultural minorities into consideration and enforce them in compliance with procedures for upholding pluralism in arts, media and religion.[119]

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[117] Cf. Als Ziel der kulturpolitischen Entwicklung der nächsten Jahre sollte die **kulturelle und kulturpolitische Autonomie der Sorben in Deutschland** stehen, so wie sie von anderen Volksgruppen und Sprachminderheiten in Europa – darunter vielfach gerade deutschsprachige Minderheiten – bereits erreicht wurde. (1994: 23; 1997: 21)

[118] Cf. Oberstes Ziel aller sorbischen Kulturarbeit, dem Einzelaspekte untergeordnet sind, ist die **Stärkung der Lebenskraft der sorbischen Kultur** als Bestandteil der Lebenswelt und der Lebensinteressen der sorbischen Bevölkerung; erst dadurch kommt es zu einem gedeihlichen Zusammenleben von Deutschen und Sorben in der Ober- und Niederlausitz. Dabei ist es wesentlich, die Identifikation mit der sorbischen Sprache und Kultur auch in Zukunft zu ermöglichen und zu erleichtern. Weiter ist, eine breite und lebendige kulturelle Öffentlichkeit im Siedlungsgebiet der Sorben zu entwickeln, wobei auch hier der Dialog mit der deutschen Bevölkerung und den Völkern der Nachbarstaaten nötig ist. (1994: 21; 1997: 19)

[119] Cf. Vor diesem Hintergrund sollte es künftig selbstverständlich sein, dass die zur Förderung der sorbischen Kultur bestimmten öffentlichen Mittel **vorrangig diesem Ziel** zugute kommen und bei Entscheidungen über die Vergabe solcher Mittel – unter Berücksichtigung des für die Förderung

As already mentioned, language has played a predominant role in the Sorbian discourse and has been overemphasized as an exclusive element in the common understanding of Sorbian ethnicity and identity. However, for the commission, language constitutes only one of the components of Sorbian culture in everyday life. As to the advancement of the Sorbian language, the commission proposed that a switch from a "defensive" to a "proactive" strategy would inaugurate the betterment of culture. The principal standpoint on which the commission relies is that the right to one's own language is a fundamental human right of any people in a democratic society. This must therefore also be assured for the Sorbs.[120] In addition to applying regulations at the federal, state and municipality level and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe, which I alluded to in Chapter 2.2, the use of the Sorbian language should be channeled in a proactive direction. This means that the employment of the Sorbian language ought not be forcibly moved from the public into the private sphere, for instance, into the family alone. Rather, the public space of communication should be allowed to build a wider and more solid stage for the Sorbian language. As suggested in the report, the Sorbian language should be promoted and developed in the fields of education, schools and mass media (1994: 31ff.). Alongside a project that specifically promotes the attractiveness, flexibility and creative power of the Sorbian language, schools are also seen as important institutions for ensuring the preservation and expansion of the Sorbian language. In this regard, the right to have classes taught in the Sorbian language, which requires cooperation with the authorities concerned, is therefore emphasized. Moreover, media distributed in the Sorbian language is a powerful endorsement of promoting the vitality of Sorbian language and culture. Printed media (newspapers, periodicals, literary works), music, film, radio and television programs facilitate acquiring a Sorbian presence on the media scene. Furthermore, it is also important to apply the principle of integration and networking in promoting Sorbian culture (e.g. Sorbian language) among the Sorbian population because it is scattered over a fairly large region in Lusatia. Along with the principle of pluralism and decentralism, it is believed that these are new forms for the democratic promotion of culture.[121]

Moreover, it is also important to note that no person or institution has the authorization to monopolize the content and definition of Sorbian culture, which includes Sorbian music, dance, customs, literature and so forth. The principle of plurality and the doctrine of variegated orientation are thus accorded primacy. The people concerned are expected to make their contributions to Sorbian culture

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kultureller Minderheiten gültigen deutschen und zwischenstaatlichen Rechtes und unter Einhaltung von verfahren zur Sicherung der künstlerischen, publizistischen und konfessionellen Pluralität – die Maßstäbe der Betroffenen entscheidendes Gewicht erhalten. (1994: 21f.; 1997: 19)

[120] Cf. Kulturförderung beginnt mit **Sprachförderung**. Das Recht auf die eigene Sprache ist grundlegendes Menschenrecht einer Volksgruppe in der demokratischen Gesellschaft und muss auch bei den Sorben gesichert sein. Bei der Förderung der sorbischen Sprache sollte eine neue Strategie – aus der Defensive zur „Offensive" entwickelt werden, die dem Rechnung trägt. (1994: 22; 1997: 20)

[121] Cf. Angesichts der Minderheitenstellung der Sorben in den meisten Siedlungsgebieten sowie der Weitläufigkeit ihrer Wohngebiet sollen künftig bei der Förderung der sorbischen Kultur die Prinzipien der **Integration und Vernetzung** gelten (z.B. auch mit dem Bildungswesen und der übrigen Sprachförderung). Mit den Prinzipen des Pluralismus und der Dezentralität sind diese Grundsätze zu neue Formen demokratischer Kulturförderung zu verbinden. (1994: 22; 1997: 20)

recurrently and in free competition with one another.[122] This point, in my view, can be associated with the commission's position on the recruitment of people with expertise to the advisory and decision-making bodies for cultural development in the Sorbian community. It is emphasized that biological descent, a sense of a certain group belonging, or administrative hierarchy should not be allowed to be detrimental to the professionalism of cultural institutions.[123] These two points highlight the democracy, plurality, and openness present in conducting the promotion of Sorbian culture; more significantly, these qualities are integrated into Sorbian culture.

The commission has taken strengthening the vitality of Sorbian culture as the primary principle in the promotion of Sorbian cultural work. The qualities of dynamism, openness and innovation play a role not only in institutional work, the employment of instruments to promote Sorbian cultural interests, and in reviewing areas and problems of Sorbian culture within the Sorbian community, but also in external surroundings and relationships. Therefore it can be expected that cultural manifestations of the Sorbs will make reference to the changes taking place in their region and in general to the specific radical, political, social, and economic changes facing the new German states after the reunification of Germany. Moreover, owing to the geographical location of the Sorbian-populated region bordering Poland and the Czech Republic, and their shared Slavonic ancestry and language with Slavonic-speaking countries, the Sorbs have the potential to function as mediators between the neighboring countries east and south of Germany.[124]

To a greater extent than the commission's guidelines for promoting Sorbian culture, financing has been the central concern of the Sorbs. The ultimate aim of securing funding is to preserve the independence of Sorbian culture and promote its viability and capacity for development. First, the division of labor for funding the promotion of Sorbian culture needs to be taken into consideration. The specific cultural activities promoted by the Foundation for the Sorbian People are not meant to replace the following activities offered by the state and communal authorities: General cultural events and institutions for the German and Sorbian population (for instance, concerts, libraries, cultural activities for youths, arts classes), the maintenance of social and cultural life and artifacts in Lusatia (such as museums, preservation of historic monuments) and professional artistic performances (for example, theater, orchestra, visual arts, and literature).[125] Second, it is not their sole or even primary aim to promote

[122] Cf. Auf **Pluralität** und auf die Förderung unterschiedlicher Orientierungen ist besonders Gewicht zu legen. Niemand darf monopolisieren, was den Inhalt von Begriffen wie sorbische Kultur bzw. sorbische Musik, Tanz, Bräuche, Literatur und andere Äußerungen oder Vermittlungsformen ausmacht. Die Beteiligten sollen immer wieder neu und um freien Wettbewerb miteinander ihren Beitrag zur sorbischen Kultur leisten können. (1994: 22; 1997: 20)

[123]Cf. Beratungs- und Entscheidungsgremien für die sorbische Kulturentwicklung sollen ausgewiesene **Fachkräfte** einbeziehen. Abstammung, administrativer Rang oder Gruppenzugehörigkeit dürfen hier die **Professionalität** nicht gefährden. (1994: 22; 1997: 20)

[124] Cf. Dass die kulturellen Lebensäußerungen der Sorben auf Umbrüche in ihrer Region und allgemein auf besondere soziale oder wirtschaftliche Schwierigkeiten in der neuen Bundesländern Bezug nehmen, ist zu erwarten, ebenso die Wahrnehmung von **grenzüberschreitenden Mittlerfunktion** zu den östlichen und südlichen Nachbarn Deutschlands. (1994: 22; 1997: 20)

[125] Cf. Die gezielte, z.B. Projekt- oder Institutionsbezogene Kulturförderung durch die "Stiftung für das sorbische Volk" darf die **staatliche und kommunale Verantwortung** für eine allgemein kulturelle Grundversorgung der deutschen und sorbischen Bevölkerung (z.B. Konzerte, Bibliotheken, kulturelle Jugendarbeit, ästhetische Erziehung), für die Bewahrung der Zeugnisse sozialen und kulturellen Lebens in der Region (z.B. Museen, Denkmalpflege) und für künstlerische Spitzenleistungen (Theater, Orchester,

the maintenance of large representative institutions or, conversely, the cultivation of individual customs, but also shared "socio-cultural" ways of living in people's everyday lives require special attention. With regard to the quotidian life world, the report stresses that people's cultural activities constitute the core of maintaining and advancing Sorbian culture. More significantly, the promotion of everyday culture through organizations or associations in charge of cultural affairs has great relevance for the central objective of maintaining the capacity for survival of the Sorbian culture. According to the academics engaged in this report, Sorbian culture and identity can be crystallized in everyday occurrences in the form of cultural activities. These activities range from music, drama, art, language, traditions and customs to culinary practices and sports.[126] Concretely put, these activities can range from group hobbies, recreation, amateur arts, customs, various kinds of games and sports, celebrations and festivals to individual activities, such as embroidery and handicraft work (1994: 136ff.).

Funding means preserving Sorbian culture and language in Germany and in Europe, otherwise "a decline in funding is endangering the execution of the most essential linguistic, cultural and academic tasks, and with it the future of the Sorbian people," as noted in the "Memorandum concerning the future survival of the Sorbian people in the Federal Republic of Germany" (February 2008).[127]. Therefore individual Sorbian cultural institutions need to be involved in efforts aimed at gaining access to further financial sources (such as foundations or ethnic group support programs established by the Council of Europe and the European Union). The prerequisite for this is, however, extensive financial independence on the part of the organizations involved, as is generally required in Germany. At the same time, the bureaucratic structure in funding should be removed.[128] The general funding principle ought to be transparent, easy accessible and available, and flexible enough to adapt to necessity while remaining open to scrutiny (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 102ff.). In terms of funding for the promotion of Sorbian culture and language, the Foundation for the Sorbian People, which was established in 1990 by the federal government and the state authorities as a

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bildende Künste, Literatur u.a.) nicht ersetzen. In dieser Hinsicht ist die Arbeitsteilung bei der Kulturförderung in den von Sorben besiedelten Gebieten während der kommenden Jahre noch weiter zu entwickeln. (1994: 23; 1997: 21)

[126] Cf. Bei der Erhaltung der Eigenständigkeit und der Förderung der Lebens- und Entwicklungsfähigkeit der sorbischen Kultur geht es nicht allein und nicht primär um den Unterhalt großer, repräsentativer **Institutionen** oder, im Gegensatz dazu, nur um die Pflege von vereinzelten **Bräuchen**. Nicht nur sorbische **Künstler oder Autoren**, sondern auch die gemeinschaftlichen, „sozialkulturellen" **Lebensformen im Alltag der Menschen** bedürfen besonderer Aufmerksamkeit. Neben den Vermittlungsleistungen von **Musik und Dramatik** in sorbischer **Sprache** und neben der Pflege und Entwicklung sorbischen Musik und Liedgutes ist vor allem die Förderung kultureller Praktiken wichtig, in denen die Menschen selbst **eigenständige kulturelle Aktivitäten** in ihrer Lebenswelt in formellen und informellen Vereinigungen und Initiativen entfalten, auch solche mit geschlechts- und interessenspezifischer Eigenart, womit sie die Lebenskraft sorbischer Kultur im heutigen Alltag unter Beweis stellen. Das Spektrum dieser Leistungen reicht von **künstlerischen Spitzenleistungen** über die Pflege von **Sprache** und **Traditionen** bis hin zu „**Esskultur**" und **Sport**. (1994: 22; 1997: 20)

[127] http://www.domowina.sorben.com/pm/memorandum08en.htm. accessed September 20, 2008.

[128] Cf. In verstärktem Maße sollen sich die einzelnen sorbischen Kulturinstitutionen bei der Realisierung zusätzlicher Aktivitäten um die Erschleißung von weiteren **Finanzierungsquellen** bemühen (wie Stiftung oder Volksgruppenprogramme des Europarates und der Europäischen Union). Eine **weitgehend finanzielle Eigenverantwortlichkeit der Träger**, wie sie auch sonst in Deutschland allgemein gefordert wird und zum Abbau „hoheitlich-bürokratischer" Strukturen beitragen kann, ist dafür allerdings eine Vorrassetzung. (1994: 23; 1997: 20f.)

non-profit, dependent, public foundation based in Bautzen, Saxony. It is in charge of granting funds to the Sorbian institutions. The establishment of the Foundation was a sign that the federal government and state authorities recognized the necessity and legitimacy of supporting and aiding Sorbian culture (Toivanen 2001: 57). In the beginning (1993), the Sorbs were distributed 40 million Deutschmarks (ca. 20.4 million euros) for fostering and developing Sorbian culture and language (Tschernokoshewa 2000: 41). One half of the aid comes from the federal government, the other half comes, in a ratio of two to one, from the states of Saxony and Brandenburg (ibid.). The sum has decreased year after year (e.g. 34 million Deutschmarks (ca. 17.3 million euros) in 1995, 32 million Deutschmarks (ca. 16.3 million euros) in 1998, see Toivanen 2001: 57).

The gradual decrease in funding for the promotion of Sorbian culture and language has raised a point at issue between the Sorbs and the public financial backers (the federal government, the states of Saxony and Brandenburg). Notwithstanding the financing agreement for the Foundation for the Sorbian People, public funding has been cut, frozen or postponed. Taking 2008 as an example, the previous funding agreement expired at the end of 2007. For funding in 2008, the Foundation for the Sorbian People was granted 15.6 million euros, of which the federal government paid 7.6 million euros; the state of Saxony 5.45 million euros, and Brandenburg 2.57 million euros according to the decision made at the meeting of the Foundation Council (*Stiftungsrat*) on March 27, 2008 in Cottbus. Furthermore, the federal government planned to cut back 100,000 euros every single year for next five years (i.e. from 2008 to 2012) (AD HOC NEWS March 27, 2008)[129]. What is more, the federal government froze 2.6 million out of 7.6 million euros, and the state of Brandenburg blocked 600,000 out of 2.57 million euros (ibid.). According to *Domowina*, 15.6 million euros is not enough. They already had a deficit of 800,000 euros for 2008. The Foundation needs at least 16.4 million euros and inflation should be accounted for. The head of the Foundation, Marko Suchy, mentioned that the funding for the Sorbs has decreased by 20% since 1992; however, during the same period of time, the funding for the Danish minority in the state of Schleswig-Holstein has increased by 25% (AD HOC NEWS May 27, 2008)[130].

In protest against the decrease in funding, the Sorbian representative did not attend the meeting of the Foundation Council. On May 27, 2008, the Budget Committee of the *Deutscher Bundestag* (Federal Lower House of Parliament) allocated 2.6 million euros and as a result of this, the state of Brandenburg also announced to allocate 600,000 euros. Moreover, the state of Saxony announced it would increase funding for the Sorbs. However, the Sorbs demonstrated at Brandenburger Tor in Berlin on May 29, 2008, as originally planned. The press reported that around 500 people attended the rally (ZEIT ON LINE May 29, 2008[131]; Sächsische Zeitung [on line] Sachsen im Netz May 30, 2008[132]; "Das Parlament" with the feature "Aus Poltik und Zeitgeschichte", issue 23 from June 2, 2008[133]). This was the first time in Sorbian history that the Sorbs protested publicly for funding needed to preserve and promote their culture, language and institutions. In the rally, the Sorbs made an appeal to receive more public funding and a

[129] http://www.ad-hoc-news.de/de accessed February 05, 2009.
[130] http://www.ad-hoc-news.de/de accessed February 06, 2009.
[131] http://www.zeit.de/news/artikel/2008/05/29/2540375.xml accessed September 20,2008.
[132] http://www.sz-online.de accessed September 20, 2008.
[133] http://www.bundestag.de/cgibin/druck.pl?N=parlament accessed September 20, 2008.

long-term financial agreement. The chairman of *Domowina*, Jan Nuck, emphasized that the federal government should not be excused from its responsibility to this minority and should not be allowed to violate international minority rights (ZEIT ON LINE May 29, 2008)[134]. From the viewpoint of the federal government, the Sorbs apparently need to make their cooperation with public subsidies transparent and economic and the Sorbian institutions need to be reformed. The federal government also claimed that they actually could have gradually decreased the subsidy of 4.1 million euros as agreed, but they did not do so. Therefore, 7.6 million euros is already "a gesture of concession" ("Das Parlament" with the feature "Aus Poltik und Zeitgeschichte", issue 23 from June 2, 2008[135]), said the Kulturstaatsminister Bernd Neumann. In November 2008, the federal government decided to add 600,000 euros. That is to say, funding will be raised from 7.6 million euros to 8.2 million euros (Sächsische Zeitung [on line] Sachsen im Netz, November 21, 2008)[136]. For 2009, the Foundation should be granted 17.2 million euros (Sächsische Zeitung [on line] Sachsen im Netz, January 14, 2009)[137]. However, 1.1 million of the 17.2 million euros is frozen because the federal government announced that the two states of Brandenburg and Saxony have to increase the same amount of subsidy (600,000 euros) as the federal government. After a great deal of argument, this tug-of-war for funding came to an end temporarily. However, the long funding dispute from 2008 is not something new, and was a reminder of the same dispute from ten years ago (1998)[138].

After discussing the central financial issue regarding the promotion of Sorbian culture, we still have to look at three aspects which need to be taken into consideration: academic research and intellectual endeavors (1994: 45ff., 191ff.); professional arts (1994: 39ff., 154ff.); and cultural heritage, museums and monuments (1994: 42ff., 178ff.). First, intellectual work constitutes the core of the Sorbs' assertion of the Sorbian culture and language for themselves and the rest of the world. Through academic research, the meaning and positioning of Sorbian-ness can be continually renegotiated. In order to achieve this goal, not only studies conducted by universities and other institutions, but also popular-science activities, amateur research, and adult education are encouraged.

Second, in the field of professional arts, it has been underscored that Sorbian culture, in its different aesthetic expressions, is not restricted to the level of folklore. As stated in the report, Sorbian professional arts can be seen as part of European arts in general. Furthermore, emphasis tends to be laid on the assertion that the creative power and potency of ethnicity not only emerges in amateur arts, folklore and custom preservation, but also in professional arts. The commission therefore inspects the respective problems, functions, and the future development of relevant originations, such as the bilingual professional theater *Němsko-Serbske ludowe dźiwadło Budyšin*/*Deutch-Sorbische Volkstheater Bautzen* (German-Sorbian Folk Theater Bautzen). In order to improve Sorbian professional culture, young artists and new recruits are given a particular significance. Second, cultural heritage, museums and monuments such as *Serbska*

[134] http://www.zeit.de/news/artikel/2008/05/29/2540375.xml accessed September 20,2008.
[135] http://www.bundestag.de/cgibin/druck.pl?N=parlament accessed September 20, 2008
[136] http://www.sz-online.de accessed February 06, 2009.
[137] http://www.sz-online.de accessed February 06, 2009.
[138] For details see Tschernokoshewa 2000: 41ff.

centralna biblioteka/S*orbische Zentralbibliothek* (The Sorbian Central Library), *Serbski kulturny archiv*/*Sorbisches Kulturarchiv* (The Sorbian Cultural Archives), *Serbski musej*/*Sorbisches Museum* (The Sorbian Museum) and other museums and historic monuments are the primary bodies for imparting and conveying Sorbian culture and identity.

Finally, in addition to conducting a general examination of these institutions and monuments, it is notable that the commission proposes that these institutions work toward a new concept of Sorbian culture. As the commission suggests in this report inspired by the *Romantische Strasse* (Romantic Street), the idea of establishing a *Sorbische Strasse* (Sorbian Street), where countrified and rural methods of building and the context of the original use are demonstrated, is conceivable (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 188). As proposed, monuments of Sorbian culture and history[139] are also going to be combined within this *Sorbische Strasse* tourism project. The monuments can stay *in situ*, and if necessary, they can be left in their current state or renovated for new use, such as hotels (ibid.). Notably, settings which relate to Sorbian history, such as villages and farms, where traditional methods of land management are experimentally practiced and developed further, allow the connection to (post-) modern, ecological management for the future to be made (1994: 189). In this vein, the joining of culture and economics makes this street not only a street of history but a road to the future. This project can be denoted as what Anglo-American research calls "heritage industry" which is not a very common method in Germany so far for analyzing the present uses and shaping of cultural heritage (Hemme 2007: 227). "Heritage industry" sums up the increasing boom of history as a postmodern form of industry which, in this context, generates economic resources within a global tourism industry (ibid.).

As American cultural anthropologist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues in her essay "Theorizing Heritage", heritage is not lost or found, stolen or reclaimed, but is rather a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past (1995: 370). Moreover, heritage not only gives existing assets (lifestyles, architecture, cultural artifacts) which are no longer viable in a second life as exhibits of themselves in the process of exhibition, while also producing something new (ibid.) Kirshenblatt-Gimblett underscores that adding the value of pastness, exhibition and difference to existing assets is crucial in the process of heritage production (ibid.). She argues that a key concept in understanding heritage production which tends to merge the preservation of assets with the instruments producing them is the "notion of interface and the possibilities interface affords for conveying messages other than those of heritage" (1995: 374). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett emphasizes that "the instruments for adding value – the interface between 'traditions' and tourism – connect heritage production to the present even as they keep alive claims to the past" (ibid.). A hallmark

[139] To the structural commission, Sorbian cultural monuments, in their entirety or parts of them, are cultural objects and their traces, including their natural foundations, are meaningful as components of culture, life world and life interests of the Sorbian people. It is suggested that the following objects could be considered to be Sorbian cultural monuments as defined above: 1. village structures; 2. cultural buildings (churches, graveyards, monasteries or nunneries; folk architecture); 3. small buildings (prayer column, chapel); 4. new buildings (Haus der Sorben in Bautzen, the already-existing buildings of Dresdner exhibiting of Saxon crafts and arts from 1896, sculptures, Sorbian memorials, buildings connected to the Sorbs or the events of Sorbian history); 5. cultural spaces (Spreewald, Delany); 6. archeological objects (entrenchments, archeological findings) (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 186).

of heritage production is precisely the foreignness of "tradition" to its context of presentation in which the interface is created as a central site for the production of meanings (ibid.). In the context of heritage industry, folk festivals, museum exhibitions, historical villages, concert parties and postcards are encoded in an interface (1995: 374f.).

Before embarking on the *Sorbische Strasse,* looking at other similar cases will help us to approach the notion of heritage industry. German folklorist Dorothee Hemme's discussion on the *Deutsche Märchenstrasse* (German Fairy Tale Street) in her " 'Weltmarke Grimm'". Anmerkungen zum Umgang mit der Ernennung der Grimmischen Kinder- und Hausmärchen zum 'Memory of the World'" ('Trademark Grimm'. Notes on Interactions concerning the Acknowledgement of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* as 'Memory of the World') (2007) is one of telling case studies. This is exemplified by the case of Kassel, a town in the north of Hesse, where Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm worked on their collected works of fairy tales. In 2005, their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen,* of which original copies are preserved in Kassel's Museum of the Brothers Grimm, were entered into the "Memory of the world" registry by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Since then, this nomination has led to a crisis of diverse views on cultural heritage – from tourist and economic institutions, cultural institutions to the general public. Drawing on heritage theory, Hemme maps out why this predicament has emerged. Moreover, she deals with the problems that come up when tradition crosses into the orbit of the heritage industry and poses questions as to the reasons for incompatibility between different forms of adding value and meaning to cultural fragments.

In 1975, cities and towns closely related to the Brothers Grimm's life trajectories were gathered to set up the *Deutsche Märchenstrasse* as a theme street. The use and instrumentalization of the life and works of the Grimm brothers as cultural heritage serve as a central resource for the construction of the German nation and the legitimatization of political ambitions in the 19th century and under Nazism. The establishment of the *Deutsche Märchenstrasse* indicates an explicit re-use for economic purposes (Hemme 2007: 237). In this process, in which cultural heritage changes from a resource for nation-building and nationalization of the state into an economically viable combination of innovation and a reference to the instrumentalization of the past, is typical for the new definition of tradition. The founders of the *Deutsche Märchenstrasse* and the entire idea of this theme street revitalize the handed-down aspect of a reverent way dealing with the Brothers Grimm as cultural heritage loaded with German-ness. However, as a result, cultural heritage is moved into a primarily economic context (ibid.). As noted in the preceding, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues, the "added value" of the past is very crucial to the heritage industry (1995: 370). Interfaces such as historic villages and re-enactments are time machines which produce a "hereness" through which the attribution of pastness creates distance that can be traveled (ibid.). In this sense, heritage converts locations into destinations, and tourism makes objects of heritage economically viable as exhibits of themselves (1995: 371). Moreover, "locations become museums of themselves within a tourism economy" (ibid.). To put it concretely, "once sites, buildings, objects, technologies, or way of life can no longer sustain themselves as they once did, they 'survive' – they are made economically viable – as representations of themselves" (ibid.). Furthermore, in the

words of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "a key to heritage productions is their virtuality, whether in the presence or the absence of actualities" (1995: 375). Museums and tourism are largely in the business of virtuality, but they claim to be in the business of realities – of real places, real things, and real experiences. "Hereness" is thus rather understood as produced than as a given (ibid.). In a way, the cooperation of the Museum of the Brothers Grimm with the heritage organization of the *Deutsche Märchenstrasse* shows a "dense combination of cultural heritage and its historically grown instruments of representation with tourism, which has acquired increasing relevance against the background of general economic developments"[140] (Hemme 2007: 238).

The above example as seen in the the *Deutsche Märchenstrasse* inspires to ask one important question which needs considering: How is cultural heritage understood in the cultural economy of tourism, such as manifested in the entire idea of the *Sorbische Strasse*? The question as such entails the interplay between culture and economy, which is new but important for the Sorbs, because of the identity and vitality of the Sorbian people and culture will be therefore reinforced while the financial situation of the Sorbs, which has not always been ensured as discussed in the preceding sections, could also simultaneously be guaranteed. However, the implication of cultural heritage in tourism is treated paradoxically: On the one hand, people in host societies identify this as an intertwining of culture and commerce, which not only folklorizes and commercializes their culture, but also poses a threat to "authenticity" of their culture; on the other hand, tourism is a means with which people in host societies can earn a living.

This ambivalent attitude undeniably subscribes to the viewpoint that the combination of culture and tourism is unhealthy. However, it leaves no space for us to explore the meaning of cultural heritage, because in this sense, cultural heritage is seen as a given essence and a static fossil of history. Moreover, tourism is seemingly regarded as a necessary evil with which wealth is generated but is inimical to local culture and identity. This is especially perplexing for an ethnic minority, such as the Sorbs. According to the Sorbian elites, the local majority of German tourism organizations and travel agencies make Sorbian tradition and customs a tourist attraction by portraying them as an "exotic other" without consulting the Sorbs as to how they celebrate the festivals or which occasions women wear what kind of traditional Sorbian costumes (Toivanen 2001: 126ff.). In the Sorbs' eyes, their tradition is being exploited for tourism. However, this does not mean that the Sorbs fail to recognize the significance of tourism. Rather, the Sorbs are trying to gain a foothold in tourism by establishing a Sorbian tourism association in March 1996, so that they themselves can decide how to represent their culture to tourists and protect their own culture and tradition from being taken advantage of and arranged by others (2001: 128).

Regarding the case of the Sorbs, in my view, the *Sorbische Strasse* initiative will open up the possibility to read the meaning of cultural heritage anew. Especially, as the idea of the *Sorbische Strasse* suggests, the combination of culture and commerce makes cultural heritage more than a marker of identity and rather an economic resource for the

[140] Cf. In der Zusammenarbeit des Grimm-Museums mit der Deutschen Märchenstrasse zeigt sich diese [...] dichte Verquickung von kulturellem Erbe nebst seinen historisch gewachsenen Repräsentationsinstrumenten und Tourismus, welche vor dem Hintergrund allgemeiner Wirtschaftsentwicklungen wachsende Relevanz erhalten hat.

Sorbs and Lusatia. To better discuss this issue, cultural heritage should be contextualized in the development of tourism against a background of increasingly neo-liberal-oriented cultural politics. This stands in relation to international neo-liberal economic policies during the 1980s, emphasizing the downplaying of the role of the state in the regulation and management of economic development. Deregulation and privatization is therefore the core of economic policies on the basis of neo-liberalism. If we take the UK in the 1980s as an example, the introduction of neo-liberal economic orthodoxy was an endeavor to diminish the state burden of public expenditure and encourage a spirit of entrepreneurialism which, coupled with policies directed towards preserving national heritage, also gave rise to opportunities for growth in tourism (Meethan 2001: 50). In the developing countries, privatization is replacing the previously applied system of nationalization. Free market economy has also been introduced into the former Eastern bloc states. In these countries, the interconnection between privatization and international tourism is restructuring the local economy and is promoting a greater degree of indigenous entrepreneurship (ibid.).

The case of the old Soviet bloc countries is significantly relevant for the Sorbs, as they lived in former East Germany. The Sorbs have also sensed a need to restructure their local economy by suggesting in the report that Sorbian-ness could be combined with regional economic welfare, as exemplified in the establishment of (middle-class) Sorbian entrepreneur associations. This means it is conceivable that Sorbian and regional purchasing power could be orientated toward Sorbian crafts and commerce (*So langsam wird's Zeit* 1994: 96). In this sense, Sorbian-ness is seen as resource (ibid.). This line of thought, in my view, could be connected to the cultural economy of tourism in the Sorbian case since the Sorbs, as an ethnic minority, have difficulty acquiring funding to represent themselves and interpret their cultural heritage.[141] This financial difficulty was especially evident after the Reunification of West and East Germany. Moreover, it is notable that cultural policy in Germany during the 1990s was predominantly molded by the Reunification and the dwindling financial means of the local authority areas since the mid-1990s at the latest (Schwencke et al. 2009: 20). Seen in this light, the concept of the *Sorbische Strasse* could not only help promote the local economy, but also, as repeatedly emphasized in the report *So langsam wird's Zeit*, help to revive and enhance the vitality of the Sorbian people by integrating life backgrounds, living surroundings, village structures, old buildings and new creative architecture into the program of fostering Sorbian cultural heritage.

The way that the Sorbs deal with cultural heritage in the cultural economy of tourism is manifested in their small-scale participation in the local development. That is to say, the Sorbs involve themselves in the planning processes of development, by which they can manage the negative consequences of tourism and gain positive advantages for the local development and the Sorbian people, whose needs and wishes are taken into consideration and respected.[142] The Sorbs' participation connotes the assertion of Sorbian identity, local spatial practices and lived experiences. Moreover,

[141] See also Melanie K. Smith's discussion on ethnic, indigenous and minority heritage which are marginalized in the frame of the national heritage. Ethnic and minority heritages were often seen as a threat to national culture, and ignored and displaced under Eurocentricism. Moreover, ethnic and indigenous groups scarcely have the political advantage and economic means to represent and interpret their heritage (2006: 92ff.).

[142] See Meethan's discussion on "localizing development" in the globalization (2001: 59ff.)

deregulated and privatized neo-liberal policies and the diminished involvement of the state intensify localized organization (see Meethan 2001: 61). In this sense, universalism is rejected, but difference is emphasized. In the case of the Sorbs, the initiative of the *Sorbische Strasse* is an expression of the singularity of Lusatia while simultaneously celebrating Sorbian-ness as difference. Cultural heritage is neither a unified category with a described meaning of people and place, nor an essential truth fossilized in history, but rather a construction with more than one meaning: It serves a sense of ethnic, national and cultural identity, a sense of distinction from the place and culture of host societies and is an important part of the cultural economy of tourism and a product on the tourist market. Most importantly of all, to borrow from Hemme's conclusion, which is inspiring to my discussion on the case of the Sorbs here, tradition gains a new interpretation in postmodern heritage industry (2007: 247). This is exemplified in the employment and instrumentalization of the life and works of the Grimm brothers in different initiatives, such as "Kassel-Wikipedia", an extensive Internet lexicon constructed by the local press as a way of bringing together the encyclopedic thinking of the 19th century and the open-source sphere of the postmodern knowledge society, or the theater play "Gestatten Grimm" which fills the "Trademark Grimm" with new content and life. Cultural heritage is re-negotiated and interpreted and new aspects come out of the inexhaustible resources of the life and works of the Grimm brothers. All these provide an anchor point in the past and simultaneously serve the location of the present (ibid.).

2.4.2.2 Reviewing the Report

In this omnibus report containing results of investigations and suggestions, a wide range of issues concerning Sorbian culture are put under scrutiny. In my reading of this study, the ideas concerning the manifold implications that the strengthening of *Lebenskraft* (vitality), *Lebendigkeit* (liveliness), *Lebensfähigkeit* (viability) of the Sorbian culture carry set the tone for the conceptualization of ethnicity, ethnic identity and Sorbian-ness. According to the commission (1994: 89f.), the idea of innovation is remote and extraneous to the discourse on Sorbian culture. Generally Sorbian cultural activity is put under the banner of nationalist projects, which usually overwhelm the complexity of modern society and the tendency toward aesthetic diversity. Innovation is therefore left out and even perceived as a threat to Sorbian tradition.

Along with language and customs, religion also exerts a durable influence on Sorbian identity. In the past, the roles of Sorbian priests, choirmasters and organists, who were also school teachers and song leaders in churches, assumed greater prominence by sowing and nurturing Sorbian consciousness. Religion, significantly Catholicism, has saturated people's lives. Catholic thinking, feeling and acting have had a lasting effect on the piety and devoutness of the Sorbs (see Walde 2000b: 98f.). In the 10th century, Otto the First forced the Sorbs to convert to Christianity. In the 16th century, the Reformation saw the conversion of 90% of the Sorbs to Protestantism; only a small part of the Sorbs residing in the parish of Bautzen, Kamenz and Hoyerswerda in Upper Lusatia remained Catholic.[143] This Catholic enclave has always been regarded as

[143] This includes the following villages: Croswitz, Nebelschütz, Ostro, Ralbitz, Storcha, Rabibor, Sdier and Wittichenau (Walde 1993: 38).

the center of intact ethnic identity and of the Sorbian language, as 50-90% of the inhabitants speak Sorbian and the colloquial language among most villagers is Sorbian.

The syncretism of religion and language entails the creation of a center of culture for the Catholic Sorbs (Koschmal 1995: 43f.). Religion and churches have maintained a cultural life which covers all spheres of life, particularly those concerning religious customs, such as *Osterreiten* (Easter Procession Rides). National consciousness has thus become tightly connected with religion. In the words of the Sorbian academic, Martin Walde, such a unity of religion and national value is reified in "patriotic faith" (1993: 40f.), which can be distinguished from everyday religiousness. As Walde claims, patriotic-religious consciousness becomes manifest in the mass participation in religious activities and ceremonies and in the feeling of belongingness evoked by a national community (ibid.).

For the Sorbs, especially in Catholic Sorbian Lusatia, the Sorbian way of life is deeply entrenched in traditional costumes, customs and religiousness (see Walde 1993: 39). Family is thus revealed as the strongest bastion and the most important fundament for warding off the growing outside threat to Sorbian culture, tradition and language (ibid.). During the almost sixty-years of totalitarian control, first under the regime of National Socialism, then under Stalinist and post-Stalinist control, the Sorbian family was constructed as a symbolic form in which the Sorbian culture, Sorbian language and Sorbian identity could be fostered and cultivated, among other things, in order to resist external assimilation (ibid.). In this sense, the notion of the Sorbian family, which connotes a sense of collectivity, converges with the idea of a Sorbian *Volk*.[144] In his article from 1956, Józef Nowak argued from the perspective that in the *DDR* the Sorbian people were more threatened than ever before because the Sorbian family was endangered by the state (*Nowa doba*, 17 October 1956, quoted in Koschmal 1995: 44). Up to the present day, this view still prevails. Retreating to tradition and the past as symbolized in the Sorbian family is a defensive reaction to the future and modern society, which is filled with uncertainty and change (see Tschernokoshewa 1995: 109).

The unity of the patriarchal family, traditions, customs, costumes, language and religion hems the Sorbs in a kind of religious fundamentalism to some extent. As Yuval-Davis said, "the control of women and the patriarchal family are usually central to fundamentalist construction of social orders" (1997: 62). The example of young Sorbian women being asked to stay in Lusatia pertinently illustrates this situation, as the headline of the article of *Bildzeitung* dated 14 April 2000 (quoted in Tschernokoshewa 2001: 63) reads: "*Pastor predigt: Mädels, bleibt!*" (Pastor preaches "girls, stay here!"). The Catholic pastor quoted here is sounding the alarm that the Sorbs, as a small *Volk*, will die out because their young women are running away from Lusatia to Western Germany to find jobs and marry Western Germans, and their children will grow up in the western part of Germany. If this continues, the Sorbs will soon be extinct. Women are counted as being responsible for the Sorbs' existence. This is to say that they are expected to play their social role "properly", otherwise it will cause a social disaster (see Yuval-Davis 1997: 63). Women who try to have their own lives somewhere else other than in their homeland are branded as traitors or even accused of "*Mord an den Eltern*" (Murder of their parents) in the sermon of one curate

[144] See Chapter 1.1.1 for a theoretical discussion on family in the nationalist projects and discourses.

(*Katolski Posoł*, No. 14, 19 July 1992, quoted in Tschernokoshewa 2001: 64). The effect of religious fundamentalism has been very detrimental to women, as it leaves no room for women's ability to act as a subject with intention and skills; it also limits and singularizes women's social roles and oppresses their activities. If women step outside their preordained boundary, the proxy for religious fundamentalism, for example the priests, will advocate strictures on their behavior.

The rigid edifice composed of religion, family, tradition and language wields its power not only over people's lives, but also the "performance", or acting out, of their culture. The commission in charge of *So Langsam wird's Zeit* asserts that the traditional objectives of Sorbian culture are fundamentally based on the aforementioned characteristics. In Sorbian culture, markedly simple, uncomplicated, naturalistic forms of content are favored. Therefore, a rural character and closeness to nature are emphasized. Philosophical and aesthetic play and "crazy ideas" seem inadequate in describing the seriousness of the situation of a minority. The qualities of authenticity, sincerity and having convictions are rather celebrated as great virtues by which Sorbian culture can distinguish itself from the German while actively resisting the destruction of Sorbian culture at the same time.

Such thinking provokes an anxiety toward openness and therefore yields to a confinement of Sorbian culture. The sacrificial mentality of Sorbs' giving themselves entirely to their own culture grows into narcissism, in German Slavist Walter Koschmal's view (1995: 81). Moreover, Sorbian culture relies on a strong group identity; in other words, the collective comes before individuality. General symbols and repeated patterns are important to cultural practices because they hold the community together. Only the conventional, normative approach to tradition-fostering guarantees the stability and cohesion of the Sorbian community. Under such circumstances, innovation is suffocated by the dominance of conservative tradition. Furthermore, the elites, or the so-called *Berufssorben* (professional Sorbs) focus their concern rather on literature and the arts than on practices of everyday life. This therefore results in a gap between the intellectuals and "ordinary people".

As already stated, plurality, openness, dynamism, democracy, innovation, and the ability to innovate should be accorded primacy in the promotion of Sorbian culture. And yet the application of these principles butts against the deeply rooted, prevailing view of Sorbian culture. However, it sheds absolutist pretensions and is not linked to doctrines that fix the Sorbian culture into a solid oneness. Discussions of the difference within the Sorbian community are an example for how this organic vision is shattered. In terms of the culture of everyday life, the report mentions the interests of different social groups, particularly women and youths. As noted earlier, the overarching rubric of nationalist projects singularizes the totality of Sorbian culture. Basic culture, or the culture of everyday life, is not widely valued in the discourse on Sorbian culture as a consequence. In the life world of everyday life, ordinary people are social actors and are therefore in the center while their subjectivity is made clear to them. Such a life world is seen as a concrete place and concrete time in which culture is lived and observed at the same time (Kaschuba 1999: 125). The conception of everyday life originates from sociological research on society, which focuses its gaze at life worlds and the space of experience where the material conditions and the instrumental order of

life match up with individual perception and collective ways of interpreting[145] (1999: 126).

Philosopher Edmund Husserl is the trailblazer in this field of life world research (see Greverus 1987: 97; Kaschuba 1999: 126). He interprets life world (*Lebenswelt*) as a "subjective world" (Greverus 1987: 97). Sociologist Alfred Schütz also plays a leading role in this sphere. In Schütz's account, the life world of everyday life is a *Wirklichkeitsregion* (region of reality), in which one can intervene and make changes because one appears in this region, through the mediation of one's life[146](Schütz & Luckmann 1975: 23, quoted in Greverus 1978: 99; Kaschuba 1999: 126). Only in this life world of everyday life can a shared communicative environment be constituted (Schütz & Luckmann 1975: 25, quoted in Kaschuba 1999: 126). The larger structures of politics, economics, and society also exert their influence and have an effect on this life world (Kaschuba 1999: 126).

Based on these considerations, the everyday experience of social actors dismantles the notion of the "cultural whole" inherent in the conventional narrative of Sorbian-ness. What is more, life experience allows group members to develop skills in their everyday lives, suggesting that people, as actors with intentions and subjectivity, have ability to mold their lives. In such a process, communication, or a communicative environment, in words of Schütz and Luckmann (ibid.), is also constructed. This communication takes place between the Sorbs themselves, between the Upper and Lower Sorbs, and between the Sorbs and non-Sorbs, between the Sorbs and Germans, and between the Sorbs and other Slavic neighbors (Polish and Czech). However, it is significant to note that communication does not only occur between people with an ethnic or cultural ascription; rather it also happens between people with different social roles, such as men and women, fathers and mothers, farmers and teachers, etc. (see Hustädt 2004: 29). As communication between two or more partners proceeds, identity is constructed. From this point of view, identity construction is not confined within an ethnic and/or cultural ascription; rather it is situational and dynamic. It all depends on with whom one talks, what the topic of conversation is, and when the talking is done.

In the life world of everyday life, the influence and the effect of the larger political, economic, and social systems cannot be passed over unnoticed. The Sorbs and Lusatia belong to the eastern part of Germany. After the reunification of Germany in 1989/1990, post-socialist transformations have been in progress. The comprehensive social changes in Eastern and Middle-Eastern Europe since 1989 have also influenced the lives of the Sorbs. As the commission suggests, the questions concerning how such changes affect the Sorbs, and how the Sorbs deal with these transformations (see 1994: 101) deserves a special note. By being confronted with these changes, the Sorbian culture faces a transitional process toward a modern society that is characterized by an increase in the uncertainty and risk in people's lives (see Beck 1992).

To sum up, in the report *So langsam wird's Zeit*, various themes and dimensions of Sorbian culture are outlined and discussed extensively. The following aspects are

[145] Cf. Die Soziologie lenkt ihren Blick von der Gesellschaft zunehmend auf die Ebene der Lebenswelt, auf jenen engeren Erfahrungsraum, in dem sich die materiellen Bedingungen und die institutionellen Ordnungen des Lebens mit dessen individuellen Wahrnehmungen und kollektiven Deutungsweisen verbinden.

[146] Cf. Die alltägliche Lebenswelt ist die Wirklichkeitsregion, in die der Mensch eingreifen und die er verändern kann, indem er in ihr durch Vermittlung seines Lebens wirkt.

included: The monitoring of and advice for improving the structure and the tasks of such Sorbian institutions as *Domowina* and The Foundation for the Sorbian People, the promotion of the minority rights of Sorbs in alignment with the other minorities in Germany and Europe, the contact and exchange with the other Slavic groups in Europe, and the examination of the spheres of Sorbian language, education, school, media, arts (literature, music, visual arts, and film), cultural heritage, museums, monuments, and intellectual and academic research.

This section is mainly based on *So Langsam wird's Zeit*, as it embraces the gamut of perspectives on Sorbian culture. Furthermore, it describes how Sorbian-ness, Sorbian culture, ethnicity and identity are narrated. To trace the main concern in this present study, I first focused on the debate about the definition of Sorbian-ness within the Sorbian community. The disputation between an essentialist understanding and subjective self-ascription illustrates a process of defining the Sorbs. Tracing this argument shows how the Sorbs are defined, while it also demonstrates an aspect of "contested identities" (Loizos & Papataxiarchis 1991). As the commission claims, "the deficiency within the Sorbian culture" (1994: 66f.) is the result of a solidified complex constituted by religiousness, customs, costumes and language. Such a configuration offers a sense of belonging. However, the perspectives on their culture entrapped in this structure are also exposed. According to the viewpoints taken in this report, the principles of innovation, openness, plurality, flexibility, and democracy are accorded primacy in the re-construction and re-definition of the Sorbian discourse on culture. It is manifest that, by doing so, the Sorbs are moving toward modern society. Among other things, the variety developed in the life world of everyday life discards the centripetal and isolated tendency caused by the superior power exerted by nationalist projects that are deeply entrenched in and durably extended to the fields of language, customs, and religion. The commission points out the problems in the Sorbian community and provides insights into the "articulated needs and desiderata within the Sorbian culture" (ibid.). Inwardly, they intend to modernize and pluralize the Sorbian culture on the one hand, and to dismantle the outwardly held pre-modern and backward image of the Sorbs on the other. Culture of everyday life is the key to reaching this goal.

2.5 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to discuss the emergence of an imagined Sorbian community in terms of Sorbian history, language, traditions and cultural perspectives. It is not my intention to define what a Sorbian community is, but rather how the idea of a Sorbian community takes shape. This process, taken as point of departure, employs an argument that counters the naturalization of a sense of belonging to a certain nation or an ethnic group.

In the construction of a minority discourse, history is usually considered one of the most plausible resources in accounting for ethnic origin on which ethnic identity is based and through which minority status is justified. In dealing with history, minority groups focus on how the past has guided the present. However, anthropological methods help to explore how the present brings about the past, because the history of an ethnic minority will not be understood in a linear way. Therefore, in dealing with the history of the Sorbs, I distance myself from the idea rooted in the seeming inevitability

of German assimilation, industrialization and modernization that caused the Sorbs to become an ethnic minority in the present day. Instead, exploring how the present time uses, experiences, remembers, forgets or invents the past is conducive to realizing how the Sorbs have constructed their ethnic identity. Reading through the course of Sorbian history, the allied notions of people/*Volk* and homeland/*Heimat* play an important role in orchestrating the Sorbs as a single group. The various nationalist undertakings inherent in the central concepts mentioned above – the intersection of the idea of a unified Sorbian people and a unified Sorbian territory – allow the love for and the "natural" link to the Sorbian community to be evoked and awakened.

Using the history of the Sorbs as a background, we can trace the trajectory of the construction of Sorbian identity as a cyclic process in which German assimilation and the threat of disappearing interrelate. This has led to a bounded view of the Sorbian culture in which language and tradition have played a part in the Sorbian discourse, significantly in the wake of growing Sorbian national consciousness since 1750 and the emergence of the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects in the 19th century. In the realm of the Sorbian language, the ethnic elites endeavored to develop the Sorbian language, especially the written language, in newspapers in order to evoke people's sense of belonging through the idea of a Sorbian community; simultaneously, folksongs, folk tales, and religious literature helped the Sorbian language to increasingly become a "mother tongue" for the Sorbian people. In this way, people therefore believe that their membership in the Sorbian community is a natural-given fact.

In the nationalist and ethnic process, tradition – along with history and language – also constitutes the main core of Sorbian-ness. As a subordinate minority, the Sorbs see the tradition denoting the authenticity inherent in Sorbian-ness as not only an explicit attribute accenting their ethnic identity, Sorbian tradition also serves as a means of surviving and resisting Germanization. Of the various Sorbian traditions (music, cuisine, religious holidays, seasonal festivals, etc.), traditional Sorbian costumes signal Sorbian-ness overtly as a boundary between the Sorbs and other groups (e.g. the German people). However, as illustrated in Brunhilde Miehe's study (2003) mentioned above, traditional "Sorbian" costumes were originally farmer's clothes, but they have been gradually constructed as "Sorbian" and interwoven with custom and religion. Moreover, traditional Sorbian costumes show how gender and ethnicity are related because women, as those who wear the traditional costumes, become symbols of Sorbian culture and tradition.

Guardians are needed in the process of handing down language and tradition to future generations. Within the framework of my main thesis in this study, "s*erbska mać*" (Sorbian mother), a term coined in the 19th century nationalist projects, was regarded as a guardian that not only fostered, but maintained and passed down language and traditions to children. Sorbian women therefore played an important role in the nationalist projects. The responsibility of preserving the Sorbian language and tradition was naturalized and personified as the Sorbian mother. This process seen here transforms Sorbian women from biological reproducers into cultural ones. In both fields of language and tradition, Sorbian women are integrated into the nationalist projects founded by men. They are expected to be national actors, while their feminine conduct and gender interests are fixed in the framework set by the intellectuals of their group. The discussion of Sorbian women as cultural guardians conceptualizes the Sorbs

in terms of tradition and language. The content of the notion of the Sorbian mother shows that the interrelated concepts of culture, ethnicity, and identity are naturalized as inherent attributes of the Sorbian people. This process of naturalization leads to a homogenization and essentialization of the above complex relation of notions. The first step toward discarding such ideas is the anthropologization of the Sorbian history which is deemed the origin of the group, patinated with immutability over time. In this sense, the history of the Sorbs needs to be pluralized as *histories* and unlocked as dynamic, innovative and cultural histories (see Greverus 1995: 21) in which people play their roles as active social actors rather than passive cultural bearers, letting their everyday lives, which are full of connections, become visible.

Taking the angle of everyday life as a starting point for "refreshing" the definition of the Sorbian people, Sorbian culture, Sorbian ethnicity and identity, the Sorbian Institute, in cooperation with other academics in cultural studies and history, drew up a report on the cultural perspectives of the Sorbs called *So Langsam wird's Zeit* (1994) to scrutinize and reevaluate a wide range of issues regarding Sorbian culture. As suggested in the report, the notion of culture in the Sorbian context should be interpreted as a strategy for coping with a life that is filled with vitality, liveliness, and viability. Among others things, the aspect of everyday life, which has thus far passed unnoticed in the Sorbian discourse, is of great help for dismantling the essentialist perceptions toward culture that are entrenched and consolidated in the nationalist projects and which solidly reached out to the spheres of language and tradition accorded with so much importance in the Sorbian culture. My study is in agreement with the main standpoint – the culture of everyday life – on which the report relies. Approaching the Sorbian people and Sorbian culture from the perspective of everyday life practices and experiences not only turns the Sorbs into acting agents, but also reveals the variegation and heterogeneity in their lives. The lives of Sorbian people are therefore seen as lived. In the following chapters providing an analysis and discussion on the practices and experiences of everyday life of the women interviewed, we will encounter the life world of the Sorbs.

CHAPTER 3 A DIALECTIC PROCESS OF ETHNICIZATION AND ETHNICITY

In the preceding chapter, the discussions of the emergence of a Sorbian community helped us to grasp how the Sorbs are constructed and imagined as a unified whole. Because of complex, aggregate cultural views in the Sorbian discourse on history, language and tradition, this creates an imagined Sorbian community. It is the ethnic intelligentsia who contributed to the entrenchment, consolidation and strength of the Sorbian-ness has taken by means of employing a variety of nationalist strategies. In this process, in which the Sorbian consciousness is evoked, the Sorbs are conceived as one group as if they were a natural, spatially and temporally bounded, stable and static unit. As noted in the conclusion of the previous chapter, it is Sorbian history that is utilized as the very evidence and tool with which the Sorbian intellectuals underpin their ethnic identity and on which the Sorbian identity is grounded in resistance to the erosive flow of time. However, anthropologizing Sorbian national history, or "history from below", and rendering the "triviality" of people's everyday lives visible is conducive to understanding how people, as active social agents, undergo a process of constructing their identities by narrating their own histories.[147] The first step will be to demonstrate and analyze how my informants construct ethnic identities which cannot be conceived of in binary terms but should rather be observed as oscillating between different situations within the process of ethnicization and ethnicity.

Römhild, who brilliantly elucidates the relationship between ethnicization and ethnicity in her discussion on *Russlanddeutsche*/Russian Germans, defines ethnicity as a form of social organization in which ethnic group members fall back on certain cultural features selected to construct a unified and clear image that distinguishes them from others (1998: 13). As Römhild argues, ethnicity can be considered a companion to ethnicization within an all-embracing ethnic discourse by recognizing it as an exogenous aspect of ethnic identity-building in which the attribution of ethnic identity comes from outside the ethnic group (1998: 152). Moreover, Römhild argues that ethnicity is not a given, already-existing fact, but rather a reaction to ethnicization (Römhild 1998: 152; Scherr 2000: 410). Particularly for disfavored minorities, ethnicity takes the center stage in bringing about a strategy of collective self-organization in order to achieve social existence (*Dasein*) and recognition in the society where they are ethnicized as Others (see Römhild 1998: 151f; Greverus 1981: 223). In the process of social positioning, marginalized social groups construct themselves as an ethnically and culturally defined collectivity by focusing on and emphasizing their shared ancestry, history, language, tradition and subjective ascription as "one" group. This involves a process of inclusion and exclusion in which the mechanism of homogenization and differentiation is activated to create a unified "inside" and exclude the Other "outside". At the same time, it connotes a process of boundary-making that is only possible through the interaction in and between groups (see Barth 1969a; Welz 1994: 72; Bielefeld 1992: 115; Ha 2000: 386). In terms of ethnicity, the act of self-assertion is a temporary process of social construction: It is not necessarily permanent, but it can be

[147] *Auf der Suche nach hybriden Lebensgeschichten. Theorie – Feldforschung – Praxis* edited by Elka Tschernokoshewa and Maria Jurić Pahor (2005) is an example for illustrating the richly-textured everyday life of people in Lusatia.

revoked or revised, depending on the context (Römhild 1998: 152; 1999: 261).

As I have said above, in this chapter I am going to explore how a number of Sorbs construct their ethnic identities through the ethnicizing gaze of Germans in which they claim their Sorbian-ness and self-ethnicize themselves as a Sorbian people. In this way, they can affirm and enhance their "we-consciousness" in a society besieged by the German people. It is very important to note that these processes interrelate and intertwine, as they are the product of social interaction. Simultaneously, we have to be aware that there are a variety of facets and forms both of the phenomenon of ethnicization (Römhild 1998: 48; Scherr 2000: 410; Bukow 1994: 12f.) and of ethnicity (Römhild 1998: 157). Moreover, various strategies are exercised to assign the Other to a certain ethnic category while attributing oneself to an ethnic collectivity. As to the construction of Sorbian ethnicity, there is still one point which needs to be clarified here: in my study, the confrontations between the Sorbs and the Germans, the German-speaking Sorbs and the Sorbian-speaking Germans, the Sorbian-speaking Sorbs and the German-speaking Sorbs are the major details that I rely on to portray the process of formation of the Sorbian identity. However, notably, this Sorbian-German relationship is not the only confrontation. Rather, there are other Others who also play a role in constructing Sorbian ethnicity – be they other Slavic peoples, such as Czechs and Poles, or other ethnic minorities (Danes, Frisians, Sinti and Roma), migrants, refugees in German society, or other threatened ethnic minorities in other countries, or minorities whose languages are lesser used. Sharing the same Slavic origin or having the same position as minorities make the Sorbs closer to these Others. The social interaction between the Sorbs and other Slavic peoples will be dealt with briefly in this chapter (Chapter 3.1.2) and will be explored in more detail in next chapters. But seen from the point of view of Sorbian historiography and Sorbian discourse, German has been constructed as its dominant Other and main counterpart. What is more, according to the women studied here, the construction of ethnic identity also predominantly focuses on the experiences and interaction between Sorbs and Germans. Therefore in this chapter, the center of attention will be put on the Sorbian-German relationship.

The following considerations will guide us through this process in which Sorbian identity is constructed. First, what causes ethnicization? Second, how do those ethnicized react to the exogenous ascription? What does this reaction connote? Finally, with what terms do the Sorbs define Sorbian ethnicity? The process of inclusion also denotes the operation of exclusion, however, those who are left outside are not only Germans, but also German-speaking Sorbs. It must also be noted that, in this process of "Othering", women are also kept out of this ethnic community. Therefore, the question arises of why women in particular are rendered as the "outside"? How does the act of Othering proceed? Finally, why do some Sorbs define themselves as Sorbs while differentiating themselves from Germans? According to which criteria do they mark their difference? In the process of self-ethnicization, certain strategies are undertaken both by individuals and the umbrella Sorbian organization the *Domowina*. However, in this regard, some informants claim that the Sorbs appear to be an enclosed "oneness". An internal dialogue among informants on such boundedness of Sorbian people will reveal how Sorbian identity is built. Taken together, these questions may be of help in obtaining a partial understanding of how the dialectics between ethnicization and ethnicity plays out in the Sorbian community.

In addition the process of ethnicization and ethnicity, it is also important to emphasize one important point concerning ethnicity in this chapter: an "individualized" ethnicity. Ethnicity generally refers to groups and identities which form in mutual contact and interaction between groups and is commonly understood as a collective process. However, I shall argue, my following discussion based on my informants' life experiences and everyday practices will reveal that ethnicity undergoes a process of individualization. Seen in the case studies that will follow, some of those studied explain how they are not only free to, but also have to choose whether they relate to Sorbian-ness and how they connect themselves with Sorbian-ness. Moreover, some of them feel a need to give reasons for the decisions they make. "Individualized" ethnicity will therefore be an extraordinarily significant point of view for the concept of ethnicity, since it not only disrupts the homogenous Sorbian discourse, which has been extensively contextualized in the collectivity and its widely-recognized deterministic and essentialist components, but it also renders the Sorbs in the light of modernity. Most importantly of all, individuals of Sorbian minority group are therefore seen as acting agents who actively carve out their ethnic identities on their own terms. However, notably, this does not mean that ethnic identities of those studied are wholly free-floating. Rather, external constraints and social structures should be also taken into consideration in the process of the forming of ethnic identities, in which minority individuals are forced to negotiate in realtion to different counterparts – both their ethnic peers and others outside their group – in different contexts. Oscillation between constraints and choices renders ethnic identities dynamic and variable.[148]

3.1 Ethnicization: Being Othered

Ethnicization is generally understood as a process in which a group of people are described as an ethnic minority by the dominant majority in the framework of nationalist projects practiced by the nation state. For instance, in the nationalist discourse of the receiving society, immigrants are ethnicized as Others in terms of their ethnic features. This process is a way of deliberately addressing these phenomena (Römhild 1998: 141). Inevitably, the constructed ethnic minorities appear as social facts while the construction process itself is hidden from view (Römhild 1998: 147). According to Römhild, such processes of ethnicization take different forms, depending on the extent of national ideology's influence (1998: 148). The forms of ethnicization can range from harmless folklorization, stigmatization, and racist exclusion to ethnic cleansing (ibid.). Moreover, as German sociologist Wolf-Dietrich Bukow tells us, there are two aspects relating to the social process of ethnicization: 1) In the beginning, the ethnicization process develops through everyday problems and then extends to the more comprehensive social contexts (1994: 16f.). 2) The ethnicization process at first aims at marking off, or to be more exact, at excluding certain groups of people from "us", making them "strangers" or "foreigners". In the end, the dominant power starts to interpret itself in terms of ethnicity. This involves the discrimination of the ethnicized Others (ibid.). Ethnicization heralds ideological instrumentalization as its principal

[148] I am very grateful to Regina Römhild for her inspiring comments and stimulating questions on this chapter, with which I can therefore move further to unearth the dialectic process of ethnicization and ethnicity more.

approach, and it therefore veils the everyday culture actually practiced and in which the ethnic is not the only constituent, but also the spatial, economic, social and personal conditions and dynamics are central (Römhild 1998: 150). In this sense, the cultural strangeness inherent in ethnicized attribution can only be perceived as a function and consequence of difference that has been proven time and time again as being static and fixed between the collective Self and the Other (ibid.).

As seen in the process of building Sorbian ethnic identity, the Sorbs' assumed counterpart has been the German people. For the Sorbs, the dialectic between ethnicization and ethnicity takes place in the social interaction between themselves and the Germans. However, this strategy of collective boundary-making is not only propelled by ethnic attribution, but it is also driven by other categories, such as gender. I will therefore take the historical phenomenon of the "Sorbian wet nurse" as a starting point to illustrate that the process of Othering renders those disfavored not only as ethnic Others, but also as social Others (see Lenz et al. 2002: 10). However, this phenomenon of the wet nurse still exerts an influence on the Sorbs today, as asserted by one of my informants. Therefore the ethnicization process of Sorbian-ness is not merely observed from the perspective of how the Sorbs are Othered in the gaze of the Germans. Although it plays the role of precipitator, we also have to tease out how those ethnicized react to ethnicization. As noted earlier, ethnicization encompasses discrimination, especially during the period of Nazi regime. The question of how my informants were constructed as Others is central in this subsection. In the conclusion, I will demonstrate how one of my informants chose to react to ethnicization and how she interprets Sorbian-ness.

3.1.1 "*Sorbische Amme*" and "*Ammendasein*" – The Sorbian Wet Nurse and Life as a Wet Nurse

The term "*Sorbische Amme*" (Sorbian wet nurse) refers to a historical phenomenon which can be traced back to the middle of the 18th century but is still ingrained in the self-perception of the Sorbs today. According to one of my informants, Elenore, who was born in 1951, this phenomenon is referred to as "*Ammendasein*" (life as a wet nurse). For me, however, this term expresses a dialectic process in which ethnicity and ethnicization mutually influence and intertwine in the Sorbian context. This simultaneously connects the construction of Sorbian womanhood with that of Sorbian collectivity. A bundle of interrelated terms, such as ethnicization, ethnicity, self-ethnicization, gender and the construction of otherness, intersect in this broadly mixed notion of the Sorbian wet nurse.

Before adducing Elenore's argument, there is a need to briefly introduce the historical background of the Sorbian wet nurse. One of the earliest cases of the Sorbian wet nurse was reported by Karl August Engelhardt (1768~1834), a writer who mainly portrayed the lives of the Sorbs at the end of the 18th century (Zwahr 1984: 149). In a short report from 1833, Engelhardt says that in 1750 the Swedish Countess von Stenn, who lived in Dresden at that time, had just given birth to a child but was unable to nurse. In order to save her child's life, Doctor Heiger, a senior civil servant who was conferred an honorary title, suggested finding a wet nurse. He then looked for a wet nurse from the region of "wendische Türkei" ("Wendish Turkey", around Hoyerswerda, Muskau).

Because of this wet nurse, the little boy, who had been close to death, thrived. The Sorbian woman was consequently seen as the fountain of life for the baby. Accordingly, having a Wendish[149] wet nurse became a fashion in the courtly and bourgeois circle in Dresden. From this time onward, Wendish wet nurses were much sought after, not only in Dresden, but also in Berlin. In the 18th and the 19th centuries, Wendish wet nurses were very popular in all of Saxony and Prussia, and even the royal house Wettin decided to entrust their offspring to Sorbian wet nurses' care (Mirtschin 2006: 19).

At the end of the 19th century, more and more Sorbian women and girls left their hometowns in Spreewald to look for a better life, a better wage and a chance to experience city life and modern methods of housekeeping (Tuschling 2003: 293). However, the indispensable prerequisite for working as a wet nurse was to have just given birth. It means explicitly that women had to leave their own babies in Lusatia, and these infants were usually born out of wedlock. The church of the *Deutsche Kaiserreich* (German Empire) passed strictures on such morally reprehensible behavior (see ibid.), while for the bourgeois families in big cities, this was commendable and desirable (Babel 1996: 629f., quoted in Tuschling 2003: 293).

The life of the Sorbian wet nurses was vividly portrayed in paintings from the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (see Mirtschin 2006: 19f.). Not only Sorbian wet nurses, but also nursemaids and maids were the main themes in those art works. Sorbian art historian Maria Mirtschin collects and analyses paintings in which Sorbian servants were taken as themes (2006, 2007), focusing on how Sorbian women were represented in "*der Blick von außen*" (the gaze from the outside), meaning in the eyes of German artists. According to Mirtschin, the very reason why the figures of Sorbian female servants appeared so often in German art in the 19th century was their traditional costumes (2007: 124f.). Their traditional, rural Sorbian dress made their ethnic ascription immediately recognizable.[150] In fact, their traditional costumes belonged to the normality of everyday life in big cities, such as Berlin, because their Sorbian dresses were also their uniforms. In the paintings of Julius Jacob d.J., Fritz Paulsen and Heinrich Zille, Sorbian wet nurses and female servants were not treated as individuals in the paintings (Mirtschin 2006: 22, 24, 29f; 2007: 129f.). Rather, their colorful traditional costumes were used to portray a concrete urban environment (Mirtschin 2007: 129f.). The German artists illustrated how Sorbian wet nurses and servants lived in alien surroundings. Their life portraits were portrayed in the facets of "discrimination while seeking a job" (Mirtschin 2006: 22),[151] taking children out for a walk and having talks with other Sorbian wet nurses and maids in the parks, traveling with their employers, and the like. Furthermore, Sorbian female servants were portrayed by Heinrich Zille as victims of society and were often represented together with other people of the lower class, such as the police, crooks, prostitutes,

[149] The terms Sorbs and Wends as well as the respective adjective Sorbian and Wendish are understood as synonyms here. See Chapter 2.1 for a detailed historical sketch on the origins of the referred terms.

[150] In contrast to their female colleagues, the ethnic ascription of male servants was tangible only through the verbal titling (Mirtschin 2007: 127). See also Chapter 2.3 in this study for a discussion on dress and ethnicity.

[151] In "Bei der Stellenvermittlung" (Fritz Paulsen 1881), one Sorbian woman in a Spreewald costume was asked by her potential employers (a couple) to open her shoulder cloth, so that the employers could scrutinize whether this woman was qualified to be a wet nurse for their child. This is an expression of humiliation.

housekeepers, and the like. These people all struggled for existence in big cities (2006: 30f; 2007: 130).

In the context of wet nurses and maids, Sorbian women were first labeled as a "miracle fountain of natural vitality" (see Tuschling 2003: 293) for the offspring of the courtly and bourgeois families in big cities. In this sense, Sorbian women embodied "Nature" because their "natural" ability of breast feeding enhanced the naturalization of their femininity. However, the naturalization of femininity significantly appears in the discussion of the Other because the image of femininity is also considered the Other (Stephan 2000: 81). Seen as a part of "Nature", women embodied the Other, the savage, the eeriness (ibid.). Their "natural" essence – being women – makes them the Other. Additionally, their rural background expresses another dimension of Otherness in the urban environment.

As stated above, the Otherness of the Sorbian wet nurses and servants is therefore constructed on the gendered, ethnic and urban-vs.-rural levels. This threefold process of Othering precipitates the "social labeling" (Auerheimer 1992: 129; 2000: 251) of the Sorbian wet nurses and female servants. Such social labeling is deeply implicated in the ethnicization of the Sorbs. What the Sorbian wet nurses encountered in the past bears similarity to the situation of the *Gastarbeiter*/guest workers in contemporary Germany, for example. Drawing inspiration from the study on "'*Gastarbeiterlinguistik*' *und die Ethnisierung der Gastarbeiter*" (Linguistics of Guest Workers and the Ethnicization of Guest Workers) (1990) by the German philologist Volker Hinnenkamp, I locate my understanding of the term Sorbian wet nurse in the direction in which social positioning goes hand in hand with ethnic ascription (see Hinnenkamp 1990: 278). That is to say, both of the concepts "wet nurse" and "Sorbian" were installed together in the framework in which the discourse of exclusion pervades. In addition, ethnic tagging connotes social marginality,[152] as noted earlier: Sorbian women were discriminated against while seeking jobs and they were also part of society's lower class.

This ethnicization, formed in the perspectives of German-speaking society, however, turns into a self-ethnicization of the Sorbs. Notwithstanding the historical depth that the term of Sorbian wet nurse and maid carries, the lives of wet nurses leave a long and convoluted imprint on the actual lives of Sorbs today. This is what Elenore, one of my informants, calls "life as a wet nurse" ("*Ammendasein*") (interview with Elenore, September 25, 2003, in Bautzen), which she defines as how the Sorbs see themselves in Germany.[153] She stresses:

> *this life as a wet nurse is still ingrained peoples' minds, that is, they go there[to a big city], they serve, they are quiet, they restrain themselves. […] these wet nurses are actually typical for many things which happen to the Wends.* [154] (Ibid.)

[152] In Hinnenkamp's view, taking *Gastarbeiter* as an example, ethnic labeling connotes social, cultural and linguistic marginality. Beside the term *Gastarbeiter*, there are various categorizations such as "Turks" or "foreigners" indicating exogenous ethnic attributions which always bear a relation to social, linguistic and cultural deficit categories (1990: 278).

[153] Cf. Eine Selbstwahrnehmung. So nehme ich persönlich, eigentlich das Wendische oder das Sorbische in Deutschland wahr.

[154] Cf. Eine Selbstbetrachtung. Dieses Ammendasein. Ich glaube so etwas, so was ist immer noch drin in den Leuten, also, sie gehen da, sie dienen, sie sind still, sie halten sich zurück. Ich glaube so etwas, irgendwas, also diese Ammen sind typisch eigentlich für viele Handlungen, die im Wendischen, so vor

For Elenore, this is how the Sorbs observe themselves. Such self-perception hints at self-ethnicization as a minority group when facing the Germans. Or, "*as a Sorb, you stand quickly in the second row,*"[155] as priest Nowak says when talking about the problems of the Sorbs in terms of the preservation of the Sorbian-ness in the present day.[156] Elenore cites an example for us: People [the Sorbs] pay taxes, but what does the state give those people back? For instance, she said she saw a sign written not in Italian, but in German in bold letters on the freeway in Southern Tyrol, Italy, when she took a vacation there. The Italian was written in small letters. She asserts this would not happen in the Sorbian regions in Germany. Elenore explains this has to do with minority politics regarding the Sorbs in Germany. Every Sorb or Wend pays the state tax, but Elenore asked why they need to show their extra appreciation for something as a matter of course, such as the establishment of the existence of the Sorbian publishing house. She emphasizes this "life as a wet nurse" is typical of her fellow Sorbs: "*people do not take a matter of course as something taken-for-granted, but rather they feel obliged to show their extra gratitude*" [157](ibid.).

Extended from the historical notion of "Sorbian wet nurse", which is imbued with ethnic and social differences, "life as a wet nurse" unfolds an aspect of the self-ethnicization of Sorbs today. Such self-ethnicization embodied in "life as a wet nurse" can be seen as a reaction of the Sorbs to the political and social discrimination in a society where the Germans are the dominant majority. "Standing in the second row" or "acting like a silent, restrained servant" can be decoded as an expression of self-devaluation. Furthermore, the practice of cultural power and normalization by the Germans brings about the self-ethnicization of the Sorbs. In this sense, the Sorbs are not only constructed as different, but they are made to see and experience themselves as "Other"; in other words, such "life as a wet nurse" reveals the Sorbs' inner compulsion and subjective conformation to the norm and knowledge represented in the regime of the power.[158]

3.1.2 Experiences with Discrimination

Continuing the thinking from the previous subsection, in the process of being ethnicized, the Sorbs stand in an asymmetrical relationship to the Germans (see Walde 2007: 110f.). In his essay "Asymmetrie zwischen Mehrheit und Minderheit am Beispiel der Sorben" (Asymmetry Between a Majority and a Minority. The Example of the Sorbs) (2007), the Sorbian cultural studies researcher Martin Walde sees the dominance of the German nation state and its culture up to the time of National Socialism as an explanation for the double bind of the Sorbs: they viewed themselves as inferior or marginal, while simultaneously they regarded themselves as a *Verlierer-Volk* (a defeated people) (2007: 117). Under such circumstances, the Sorbs chose either to Germanize

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sich gehen, denke ich.

[155] Cf. Als Sorbe steht man schnell in der zweiten Reihe.

[156] Priest Nowak was interviewed in the documentary film "*Serbski són ... sich sorbisch trauen*" (A Sorbian Dream … Getting Married Sorbian Style) (Edmund Ballhaus 2001).

[157] Cf. […] dass man für selbstverständliche Sachen, das nicht als selbstverständlich hinnimmt, sondern eine extra Dankbarkeit sich verpflichtet fühlen zu haben.

[158] I draw my inspiration from Fanon (1986: 109ff.), Hall (1990: 225ff) and Ha (2000: 378ff.).

themselves or to hide their Sorbian selves (ibid.). This was particularly evident in the period of National Socialism. The experience of being discriminated against is an example of how disempowered people are constructed as a minority under the dominance of the nation state.

As noted earlier (Chapter 1.2.1), an ethnic minority is produced in the process of nationalization because the construction of an ethnic "Other" is the keynote of nationalism; it allows nationalism to be clearly defined by means of endeavoring to create a homogeneous national culture out of the realities of heterogeneity. In the previous chapter, I also discussed which strategies and schemes are employed for conducting the national project of homogenizing culture. In this section, I will primarily rely on one woman's experiences with discrimination to continue a more in-depth discussion on homogenization in the context of the building of a nation-state by focusing on why and how people are created as strangers and become Others. The answers to these questions have a significant bearing on the key definitional categories in the construction of strangehood. The Professor emeritus of Sociology, University of Leeds and Warsaw, Zygmunt Bauman has done a study called "Modernity and Ambivalence" (1990a, see also 1993) which could help us to clarify these questions.

"There are friends and enemies. And there are *strangers*" (Bauman 1993: 143, emphasis Bauman's). With this first sentence Bauman explicitly points out that friends and enemies stand in opposition to each other, yet the anticipation of enmity is indispensable in the construction of friendships. The oppositions between friends and enemies are what constitute relationships: Friendship and enmity constitute the archetypal forms of all socialization; that is to say, "between themselves, they make for the frame within which socialization is possible, they make for the possibility of 'being with others'" (1990a: 144). To put it succinctly, "if not for the enemies, there would be no friends" (1990a: 145). But the stranger rebels against this cozy opposition – he or she threatens socialization itself; moreover, the threat he or she carries is more awesome than the fear of the enemy (ibid.). The appearance of the stranger undermines social life founded on the dichotomous opposition and clear-cut difference between friends and enemies. This is because the stranger is neither friend nor enemy; he or she may be both. The stranger is one of the "undecidables": "all neither/nor, that is, simultaneously, either/or. Their undetermination is their potency: because they are nothing, they may be all" (1990a: 146). This is the central feature of the stranger. The stranger is not only the embodiment of the "undecidable", but also that of "indetermination" and "unfamiliarity". Bauman understands this in the context of hermeneutic problems. Hermeneutic problems result from the awesome behavioral paralysis that follows the failure of classificatory ability (ibid.). In the modern era, social order is achieved through social organization, which can be seen as an endeavor to diminish hermeneutic problems and tone down vexation. According to Bauman, the method of territorial and functional separation would reduce these hermeneutic problems and is therefore a very powerful factor in their perpetuation and reproduction because the possibility of any misunderstanding is blocked through continuous and close observation. Therefore, the persistence and consistent possibility of hermeneutic problems occurring can simultaneously be seen as the motive and the product of boundary-drawing efforts (1990a: 147). But boundary-drawing is not always fail-safe and boundaries can be also crossed. In this light, hermeneutic problems are likely to

persist as a permanent "gray area" that surrounds the familiar world of daily life. And that "'gray area' is inhabited by unfamiliars; the not-yet classified, or rather classified, by criteria to ours, but as yet unknown to us" (ibid.). There are many different kinds of "unfamiliars". One of them, with whom no daily interaction exists, resides in a remote place, while the other is the stranger who comes into the life world and settles there. The emergence and the presence of the stranger is seen as a constant threat to world order because of his or her undermining the world's spatial ordering, upsetting the resonance between physical and psychical distance, his or her incongruity in involvement and indifference, partisanship and neutrality, detachment and participation (1990a: 150). In this sense, the stranger is indeterminate, unlike the social order that is constructed based on binary classification. This indeterminacy expresses an ambivalence that is characteristic of the stranger: "He stands between friend and enemy, order and chaos, the inside and the outside. He stands for the treacherous of friends, for the cunning of enemies, for fallilibity of order, penetrability of the inside" (1990a: 151).

Indeterminacy breaks up the order that is crucial for the modern era. The presence of strangers who cannot be clearly classified in a binarism disturbs the homogenous unity of people, culture and territory, which is the central idea in the construction of the nation-state. Therefore, in a confrontation with strangers, the nation-state fights against strangehood through the enforcement of the state-created order. Along with collectivizing friends and enemies, the nation-state eliminates strangers (1990a: 153). As Bauman emphasizes, "*The national state is designed primarily to deal with the problem of strangers, not enemies*" (ibid, emphasis Bauman's). Nationalist ideology redefines friends as natives, and rights are ascribed to friends only. Modern nation-states promote "nativism" and construe their subjects as "natives" while simultaneously endeavoring to trim down or do away with all divisions and differences that stand in the way of national unity (1990a: 154). Ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural homogeneity is praised and enforced. Shared historical memories are constructed, and a sense of a common mission, common fate and common destiny is promoted. In a word, uniformity is *the* essential principle which the nation-state attempts to enforce in the practice of nationalist ideology. Assimilation is employed as a nationalist strategy used to fight against ambivalence and to reify the creation of uniformity, since difference is not tolerated. Moreover, the vision of assimilation confirms social hierarchy and the extant division of power. The superiority of one form of life and the inferiority of another is assumed in the idea of assimilation. This inequality then becomes an axiom and a point of departure for all arguments. Scrutiny and challenge are ruled out. The vision and the program of assimilation ascribes the discrimination against what is inferior to a collectively maintained, communal way of life that is seen as a disturbing factor for the homogeneity of the nation-state, eliminating the communal authorities which are regarded as its potential competitors. Once a collectivity is discredited and disempowered, it becomes powerless and only its individual members remain. As individual members of the stigmatized group, they are rendered objects of examination and assessment by the dominant group, who hold complete control over the meaning of their conduct. Any conduct and any meaning they attempt to invest in their actions themselves *a priori* reasserts the "controlling capacity of the dominant group. Their clamoring for admission automatically reinforced the latter's claim to dominance" (1990a: 159).

To sum up, assimilation is a typically a modern phenomenon:

> It derived its character and significance from the modern 'nationalization' of the state, i.e. from the bid of the modern state to linguistic, cultural and ideological unification of the population which inhabits the territory under its jurisdiction. Such a state tended to legitimize its authority through reference to shared history, common spirit, and a unique and exclusive way of life. (1990a: 160)

Cultural intolerance and impatience with all difference were the major features in the era of the nation-state. Moreover, the nationalization of the state merged political loyalty with cultural conformity, while the latter was not only seen as a condition, but also as a means of attaining the former (1990a: 161). However, as Bauman observes, "the modern project of cultural unity produces the conditions of its own unfulfilment. By the same token, it creates the unprecedented, exuberant dynamism which characterizes modern culture" (1990a: 163). In this light, "order and chaos are both modern ideas" – and they emerged together (ibid.). Chaos, which is construed as "the Other of Order", is a product of order's self-constitution; although chaos is seen as pure negativity, as the side-effect of order and as the waste of order, it is the condition *sine qua non*: "Without the negativity of chaos, there is no positivity of order; without chaos, no order" (1990a: 165). In modern times existence is effected and sustained by "social engineering", which has exterminated ambivalence and created order and therefore made the state modern (ibid.). To define things precisely is the very effort of the modern practice of the state; everything that cannot or would not be precisely defined is suppressed and eliminated. It follows from this that "the Other" of the modern state is ambiguity (1990a: 166).

Not only order, but also having a vision of purity plays a major role in the creation of strangehood. Bauman has also dealt with this issue in his essay "The Dream of Purity" in his book *Postmodernity and its Discontents* from 1997. Purity means that each thing is in its rightful place and is nowhere else. "It is a vision of *order*", as Bauman defines it: "There is no way of thinking about purity without having an image of 'order', without assigning to things their 'rightful', 'proper' places" (1997: 6, emphasis Bauman's). Things "out of place" – dirt, filth, "polluting agents" – constitute the opposite of "purity" (ibid.). Notably, "purity" and its opposite, "dirt", are far from being natural and intrinsic; instead it is location that creates "purity" or "dirt", and 'purity-seekers' are therefore crucial actors in defining the location and the order of things.

For Bauman, perhaps no one gives a better explanation about purity and dirt than the British anthropologist Mary Douglas in her enlightening book *Purity and Danger* (1984). In Douglas' view,

> Dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder. If we shun dirt, [... it is because] dirt offends against order. Eliminating it [dirt] is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment. [...] In chasing dirt, [...] we are not governed by anxiety to escape disease, but are positively re-ordering our environment, making it confirm to an idea. There is nothing fearful or unreasoning in

> our dirt-avoidance: it is a creative movement, an attempt to relate form to function, to make unity of experience. (1984: 2)

Douglas not only discerns between dirt as opposed to order, but he also explicates the relationship between dirt and order as an organizational rule for the environment. This organizational aspect, in my view, can lend us a hand with understanding how dirt is substantiated as an idea for re-ordering our environment and which can be further applied to the construction of stangerhood. As Bauman puts it,

> If dirt is an element which defies the purpose of the ordering efforts, and the self-acting, self-moving and self-directing dirt is an element which defies the very possibility of effective efforts, then the Stranger is the very epitome of the latter. (1997: 10)

Strangers are the embodiment of dirt and disorder. At the same time, the work of order-making against strangers marks the coming-on of the modern era:

> The preoccupation with Strangers assumed a particularly important role among many activities involved in the daily care of purity, the daily reproduction of an inhabitable, orderly world. This happened once the work of purifying, or 'order-making', had become a conscious/purposeful activity, when it had been conceived as *task*, when the objective of cleaning, instead of keeping intact the way in which things were, became *changing the way* in which things used to exist yesterday, *creating* a new order that challenged the present one; when, in other words, the care of order meant the introduction of a new and, by the same token, *artificial* order – making, so to speak, a new beginning. This momentous change in the status of order coincided with the advent of the *modern* era. Indeed, we can define modernity as the time, or the way of life, in which order-making consists of the dismantling of the 'traditional', inherited and received, order; in which 'being' means a perpetual new beginning. (Bauman 1997: 10, emphasis Bauman's)

So far, as seen in the discussion on the construction of strangehood in the framework of the nationalization of the state, strangers are immigrants and foreigners who enter the life world and settle there. However, as seen in the case of the Sorbs, an autonomous ethnic minority constructed as a minority by the dominant group – the Germans – in the process of the nationalization of Germany, is also categorized as the stranger in the modern project of the nation-state. The state employs the nationalist strategies derived from the same logic of striving for cultural homogeneity through the vision of order and purity to assimilate the Sorbs in order to construct order by exterminating any difference embodied in Sorbian culture, Sorbian language and traditional Sorbian dress.

In the following, Helga's case will reveal how an individual member of a stigmatized group was made a stranger in the modern project of cultural uniformity. Helga was born in a little village in the north of Bautzen in 1935. As a little girl, she experienced how she was made to be an Other by those in power. The way she was treated, as Helga phrases it, was "*a kind of discrimination*" that she cannot stand up to

this day[159](interview with Helga, October 6, 2003, in Dresden). Her school belonged to feudal estate. One day, the estate overseer told her and her other classmates that there was no school that day and that everybody had to go out to the field. This interruption of school caused difficulties for Helga because, as a child living on the countryside, she had to help bring food to people on the farm every afternoon. Therefore, she told the overseer that she had to be home at one o'clock. The men shouted at her, "*What? You have to take care of the dogs*?"[160] Exactly this "dog-keeping" and the tone he spoke, in the words of Helga, "*made me feel as if I were nothing*".[161] She was not allowed to leave in advance; she consequently arrived home very late. Her mother wondered where she was. She explained to her mother what happened. Her mother cradled her, which she hadn't done since she started school, and said to her, "*He who shouts is wrong*".[162] Helga realizes that all of this occurred because of her being different (*Andersartigkeit*). However, she emphasizes that she never hides herself as a Sorb. Helga attributes this discrimination to the politics against the Sorbs during the Nazi period (1933~1945). She contrasts her experience of being discriminated with the "Sorbian atmosphere" that she felt at grammar school in Czechoslovakia near the border to Germany. At the Sorbian class of this school where she began to learn reading and writing in the Sorbian language,[163] Helga said, "*I came to know a Sorbian atmosphere for the first time there.*"[164] Before attending school in Czechoslovakia, she had never known such an atmosphere: for instance, she could talk with other schoolchildren in the Sorbian language.[165]

Helga's contemporary, Paula, who was born in 1927, experienced persecution by the Nazis during her childhood. Paula started school in 1933 when Hitler came to power. Until 1936, the rules regarding the usage of the Sorbian language were strict. Only German was allowed in school. Pupils who spoke Sorbian were fined 10 Pfennig (interview with Paula, September 26, 2003, in Bautzen). Such experiences were very common to Sorbian speakers who attended school during National Socialism.[166] For example, Emma's father, who went to school during the war, also experienced the complete ban of the Sorbian language (interview with Emma, November 7, 2003, in Cottbus). The school's headmaster forbade pupils to speak Sorbian. Pupils who spoke it were given work tasks as punishment and yelled at in front of other students.[167] Since that time, Emma's father has never spoken Sorbian in public. For Emma's father, Sorbian is the colloquial language of the family. When with strangers, Sorbian becomes

[159] Cf. Wir haben zu der Nazizeit, war's so, das unterdrückt. Sie haben uns lächerlich gemacht, oder so, also das war so eine Art Diskriminierung, muss ich sagen, die ich eigentlich bis heute nicht leiden kann.
[160] Cf. Was? Da musst du den Hund halten!
[161] Cf. In dem Ton, in dem der das gesagt hatte, so als wäre ich nichts.
[162] Cf. Wer schreit hat Unrecht.
[163] Cf. An der Grenze, aber auf der tschechischen Seite, war ich in einem tschechischen Gymnasium in einer sorbischen Klasse. Und dort habe ich dann auch Sorbisch Lesen und Schreiben gelernt, denn das konnte ich vorher ja nicht.
[164] Cf. Ich habe dort, eigentlich das erste Mal sorbische Atmosphäre kennen gelernt.
[165] Cf. Also das wir, dass man sich mit Kindern auf Sorbisch unterhalten konnte, das wusste ich früher gar nicht.
[166] For more details about the persecution of the Sorbian language see, Bott-Bodenhausen 1997.
[167] Cf. [...]in der Generation, die zur Kriegszeit in die Schule gegangen sind, was also auch meinen Vater betrifft, die haben eben komplett Sprachverbot bekommen, der Schuldirektor hat also denen verboten, zu sprechen, hat dann, wenn sie doch sorbisch auf dem Schulhof gesprochen haben, also wirklich auch Strafarbeiten aufgegeben und also wirklich die auch beschimpft.

a secret language. When Germans are around, he never speaks Sorbian.[168]

Belonging to the same generation, Helga, Paula and Emma's father went through the darkest abyss of oppression that the Sorbs have experienced and asserted in the narratives of the Sorbian history. In the dominant discourse of the nation state, the language of the minority is seen as disturbing the established conception of the nation state. As the above cases show, according to this discourse, language stands for the difference of the minority and it certainly therefore ought to be banned (Greverus 1995: 26). Additionally, in this context, Sorbian-speakers were defined as offenders (Walde 2003: 49; 2007: 117).

In the period of National Socialist dictatorship, the Sorbs were seen as "*die Wendische Gefahr*" (Wendish danger)[169] (Kunze 2001: 61) because the Nazis assumed that the Sorbs were striving toward a "reslavization" (*Reslawisierung*). In addition, they suspected that the Sorbs would assist their Slavonic neighbor countries, such as Czechoslovakia and Poland, and therefore endanger and threaten Germany (ibid.). This suspicion that the Sorbs would collaborate with the Slavonic countries as noted above is a factual given; besides, the Sorbs, seen as Slavs, ran counter to the racial concept of the Nazi racialist ideology.[170] The logic behind the all repressive measures against the Sorbs is first and foremost to maintain the orderliness of the Germans by exterminating difference. The Sorbs were seen as danger on the grounds that they did not fit in the NS-German cultural pattern – they were Slavs, they spoke the Sorbian language and they dressed themselves in the Sorbian/Wendish way (see Wippermann 1996: 37).[171] Seen from this, they are perceived in negative terms: They are not Germans and they do not speak German. They are accordingly categorized as the Other.

The construction of otherness takes various forms. Helga's experience is one example of the association of the Other with animals (dogs).[172] Actually, Helga had to bring lunch to farm helpers, but the men's reaction implied that the people on the farm were dogs. His language of scornfulness made her feel humiliated. Helga's case is not an exception. During the period of Hitler's regime, the Sorbs were often affronted as "dogs": for example, "*Ihr wendischen Hunde*!" (You Wendish dogs!) (see Ratajczak 2004: 72). Under the Hitlerite racist ideology, Slavs were devalued as "*Untermenschen*" ("inferior persons" or "subhuman creatures"). Such expression of insult functioned not

[168] Cf. [...] so jemand wie mein Vater, also genau diese Generation, das betrifft alle anderen in der Niederlausitz genauso, dass denen selber eben das Selbstbewusstsein durchaus nicht auf die Stirn geschrieben ist, was die Anwendung der sorbischen Sprache … das ist etwas, was man zu Hause spricht, was man Fremden gegenüber vielleicht als Geheimsprache benutzt, aber in der Öffentlichkeit, wenn andere Deutsche dabei sind, würde mein Vater z.B. nie sorbisch sprechen.

[169] According to Wippermann, negative statements about the Sorbs have existed since the early modern age (since 1500). However, it worsened drastically with the awakening of Sorbian national consciousness and especially after Prussian-German Poland policy had achieved unmistakably Germanized tendencies and aims. In this context, the accusations that the Sorbs were pro-Polish and pan-Slavonic were unfounded. The specter of a single "Wendish danger" drawn on the wall in front of the Berlin Gate is evidence of this (Wippermann 1996: 34f.).

[170] See Wippermann (1996) for an analysis on the persecution of the Sorbs in the period of National Socialism.

[171] Wippermann adduces a text "Das Wendenproblem in der Niederlausitz" printed in "Meldungen aus den Reich" (May 30, 1940). It is declared that "in der rassischen Zusammensetzung unterscheidet sich die Wendei nicht von der übrigen Lausitz. Als trennend wirken sich jedoch Sprache und Tracht aus. Nur so ist es erklärlich, dass bei gleichem politischen Bekenntnis zwischen Deutschen und Wenden noch immer eine deutlich wahrnehmbare Kluft besteht" (1996: 37).

[172] See also Ratajczak 2004: 72f..

only along the lines of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, but also renders National Socialist "dreams of purity" (Bauman 1997) visible; purity that is reached by means of creating and keeping orders. Any element that contaminated this purity was regarded as filth and disorder (Bauman 1997: 7).[173]

As seen in the case of Helga, on the surface, her inobservance disturbed the order defined by the man in power, but Helga knew clearly that it was her difference inherent in Sorbian-ness that inspired the disgrace. In his discussion on "Die Konstruktion von Fremdheit in sozialen Prozessen" (The Construction of Strangehood in Social Processes) (1999), Albert Scherr aims at disclosing how the perception of strangehood in social processes is produced under certain circumstances and how it becomes a component of social conflicts only under particular conditions, as opposed to seeing strangehood and its problems and conflicts as the result of strangehood and as a natural, factual given of social life (1999: 49). By referring to George Simmel (1968), Scherr accounts for a *Fremdheit* (strangehood) that it is not a characteristic of people or things, but rather a characteristic which is allocated within social relationships[174](1999: 57). By quoting Simmel, Scherr defines the meaning of *Fremdsein* (being a stranger) as a synthesis of nearness and remoteness: strangehood marks distance and difference within social relationships[175] (ibid.). Following Scherr's line of thought, Helga's experience as a stranger is enhanced by her difference, which is, as a matter of fact, defined, constructed and allocated by the estate overseer within the social relationship occurring at school. It is therefore asserted that Helga's difference and strangehood is not a "meaningful production of characteristics of people, social groups or things occurring in social reality, rather [it] always exists only in relation to a social order, in which the sphere of what can be taken for granted and what is usual and familiar is fixed" [176] (1999: 51). Scherr identifies culture as the crucial order that renders strangehood visible: Strangers are those who are not designated part of normal reality in the cultural order and as a matter of course thus call order into question (ibid.). In this sense, strangers are those who stand outside the order. By drawing on Bauman (1993), Scherr sees strangers as an expression of the "waste of order" (1999: 57f.). In the Nazi's extreme nationalist and racialist projects, the mighty treated the Sorbs with irritation because their existence called the order as a matter of course into question. For instance, the estate overseer was irritated by Helga's inobservance. Helga, Paula and Emma's father and their numerous contemporaries were regarded as strangers because they were unusual and abnormal to superior Aryan Germans under Nazi fascism.

It is in this context that the National Socialists at first tried to oppress the Sorbs entirely when Hitler came into power in January 1933. Their program consisted of forbidding and dissolving Sorbian organizations, arresting the Sorbian elites and intellectuals and conducting compulsory evictions from Germany (Kunze 2001: 61).

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[173] Other devalued idiomatic expressions for the Sorbs are "*Wendische Mafia*" (Wendish Mafia) "*Wend'sche Hanka*" (Wendish Hanka).

[174] Cf. Fremdheit [...] ist keine Eigenschaft von Menschen oder Dingen, sondern eine Eigenschaft, die innerhalb sozialer Beziehungen zugewiesen wird.

[175] Cf. Das Fremdsein bedeutet, so Simmel, „dass das Ferne nahe ist", Fremdheit markiert Distanz und Differenz innerhalb sozialer Beziehungen.

[176] Cf. sinnhafte Hervorbringung sozialer Wirklichkeit vorgängige Eigenschaft von Personen, sozialen Gruppen oder Dingen, sondern existiert immer nur in Relation zu einer sozialen Ordnung, die eine Bereich des Selbstverständlichen, Gewohnten und Vertrauten festlegt.

Later in the summer of 1933, on the grounds of the massive protests and demonstrations against the oppressive measures of the Nazis against the Sorbs from abroad, in view of German minorities in foreign countries, and the extension of the "fifth column", the National Socialists changed their tactics. Instead of more brutal violence, they rather attempted to win the Sorbs over with the ideas of National Socialism. The Nazis began to assimilate the Sorbs. Under Nazi fascism, the Sorbs were made the same as Germans. The Nazi's endeavors to acquire a similarity, sameness and uniformity connote at the same time their power in defining what is regarded as strange, outdated, inappropriate and in need of reform (see Bauman 1997: 19). In this sense, each difference inherent in Sorbian culture was neither tolerable nor bearable, as it deviated from the norm of German culture. Much emphasis was consequently placed on the "German character" of Lusatia and the Sorbs on the one hand, while any Sorbian elements were wiped out on the other (Kunze 2001: 62). By 1936, with the help of academic studies, the Sorbs became Germans who speak Sorbian (Oschlies 1991: 29).

3.1.3 "Being a Sorb Doesn't Mean Being Different!"

In the case presented above, Helga sensed that the "dog-keeping" incident was evoked by her difference as a Sorb. However, she points out that she never veiled her ethnic attribution as a consequence. Unmasking her Sorbian-ness is Helga's answer to being made an Other. In contrast, Anita responds in a counteractive way by saying, "*Being a Sorb doesn't mean being different*!" [177](Interview with Anita, November 11, 2003, in Berlin) This way of interpreting Sorbian-ness is Anita's individual strategy of dealing with being assigned the status of ethnic Other. Anita's first confrontation with "being different" occurred when she changed schools from her hometown Croswitz to Bautzen.

Anita was born in 1979 and she is "*completely of Sorbian origin – both of her parents are Sorbs, so were her grandparents who passed away*" [178](interview with Anita, November 11, 2003, in Berlin). She has two sisters. The Sorbian language is the colloquial language in her family, but they also speak German with people who do not understand Sorbian, for example, with their "German" relatives, from whom they do not distinguish themselves much. As to this bilingualism, Anita says, "*People are aware of it unconsciously, so to speak. As children, they pick it up that way naturally*" [179] (ibid.). Anita grew up in Croswitz, a Catholic Sorbian village 16 kilometers away from Bautzen. In that village, Sorbian is spoken not only in the family, but also in the public sphere, such as at stores, at the markets, in church etc. From her 7th year on, Anita attended the A-class[180] in Sorbian grammar school in Bautzen.

> *It was in Bautzen that I began to be aware of this Sorbian-ness, because people paid much more attention to the Sorbian language, because people concerned themselves fundamentally with the Sorbian language, because people who came from the country have*

[177] Cf. Sorbischsein heißt nicht Anderssein.
[178] Cf. Ich bin durch und durch sorbischen Ursprungs, also das heißt, meine Eltern sind sorbischer Natur, Papa und Mama beide, Großeltern waren es auch, aber ich habe keine mehr, sie sind gestorben.
[179] Cf. Diese Zweisprachlichkeit, die man aber unbewusst mitbekommen hat, also das hat man so aufgenommen als Kind.
[180] The Sorbian language is used as a teaching language in the A-class.

> *to differentiate themselves from those who grew up in big cities, and those city-dwellers did not speak Sorbian the same way I did in the village.* [181] (Ibid.)

For instance, teachers at school paid attention to the usage of Sorbian words, and pupils were therefore gradually taught to speak proper, standard Sorbian. For Anita, another possible explanation why she started to ponder these questions concerning Sorbian-ness was that the Sorbian language and being a Sorb had something to do with age. As a teenager, she plunges into these queries in a search for where she came from and why it is so and why people in Croswitz and in Bautzen perceive these questions through different eyes.

Furthermore, interaction with the pupils of the B-class [182] also spurs Anita to deliberate over the above questions, particularly "*to what extent they perceived themselves Sorbian. I was shocked in a sense because many of them were really afraid of coming into contact with us. Some of them thought we cannot speak German as we speak Sorbian*" [183](ibid.). However, in Anita's view,

> *[…] being a Sorb does not mean being different. It is simply that people grew up differently, that is, with another language, with another culture, but it does not mean that we [the Sorbs] do not know anything about German and that we cannot adjust or adapt ourselves, for it does not hurt.*[184] (Ibid.)

Before changing school to Bautzen, Anita had almost entirely Sorbian surroundings – her Sorbian family and the widespread use of the Sorbian language in both private and public spheres in her hometown. However, it is also very important to note that the German language constitutes a part of her life world. For Anita, it is quite natural to be around such a bilingual environment. Attending Sorbian grammar school in Bautzen is a turning point that makes her aware of her Sorbian-ness, something about which she had never thought before. Her consciousness of being a Sorb from the village is inscribed in the gaze of the city-inhabitants, especially her teachers and B-class schoolmates. It is in the gaze of the Bautzen-dwellers that Anita knows how she was perceived by the others for the first time. Such an experience is redolent of Fanon's explosive moment described in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) "Look, a Negro!" According to Fanon, this is the moment that he discovered his blackness. For Fanon, this moment is the first time he felt as if he had been simultaneously exploded in the gaze, in the violent gaze of the other, and also had been recomposed as an Other. It is at

[181] Cf. [...] mir ist da in Bautzen eigentlich diese Sorbischsein in den Sinnen erst bewusst geworden, weil man wesentlich stärker auf die Sorbische Sprache geachtet hat, weil man sich wesentlich damit auseinandergesetzt hat und weil man, dadurch dass man aus dem Dorf kam, das noch mal differenzieren muss zu den Leuten, die in der Stadt groß geworden sind und Sorbisch gesprochen haben, also die haben ein anderes Sorbisch gesprochen als ich das getan habe im Dorf.

[182] In the B-class, the Sorbian language is taught as a subject.

[183] Cf. Inwieweit sie diese Sorbische sahen, teilweise hat mich das erschreckt, weil viele wirklich Berührungsängste hatten, dass die teilweise dachten, wir können kein Deutsch, weil wir Sorbisch sprechen.

[184] Cf. […] dieses Sorbischsein ist nicht Anderssein. Es ist einfach nur, dass man anders in dem Sinne aufgewachsen ist, also mit einer anderen Sprache, mit einer anderen Kultur, aber es heißt nicht, dass uns die deutsche in dem Sinne nicht vertraut ist und dass man sich nicht umstellen kann oder anpassen kann, weil es ja nicht weh tut.

this moment that Fanon becomes aware of his Self, and it is also the moment when he constructed his identity (1986: 109ff.).

It is in the look of others that Anita discovers her Sorbian-ness. This involves two dimensions: 1) the difference between the villagers and city-dwellers; 2) the B-class-schoolmates' perception of Sorbian native speakers. First, dissimilarity between urban and rural residents is erected within the framework of Sorbian collectivity. Facing city Sorbs, Anita's difference concerning Sorbian-ness and the Sorbian language is articulated. In this regard, city Sorbs turn Anita into an inside outsider, especially because she is a Sorbian native speaker. Nevertheless, her Sorbian is also labeled as non-standard. Anita's experience is common to her younger schoolmates, who report their similar experience in "Schulzeit. Jugendliche einer zehnten Klasse des Sorbischen Gymnasiums in Bautzen" (Schooldays. Teenagers in the 10th Grade at the Sorbian Grammar School in Bautzen) (2005) by Ute Allkämper and Susanne Schatral, two students from Bremen. Allkämper and Schatral talked with pupils in Bautzen about their everyday lives, including the domains of friends, family, school, leisure time and religion. As to the level of skill in Sorbian language, those researched from Bautzen believe that they have a good command of the Sorbian language, although they do not speak it very often, while fellow students from rural areas speak the Sorbian language in their daily lives but say they cannot speak 'good' Sorbian, as their Sorbian is non-standard. In addition, it is a kind of mixture of Sorbian and German (Allkämper & Schatral 2005: 164). Moreover, the rural pupils are derogatorily evaluated as people who have a poor pronunciation in German and odd articulation in Sorbian (ibid.).

Second, the rhetoric of exclusion is illustrated in the tenuous relationship between the pupils of the A-class and the B-class, which implies that this difference is evoked between Sorbian native speakers and non-Sorbian native speakers. As Anita phrases it, schoolmates of the B-class assume the Sorbian native speakers, particularly those from rural areas in the surroundings, cannot speak German. Such a presumption mainly results on a certain prejudice of B-class schoolmates from the city towards A-class students from the countryside by hearsay without them personally knowing it to be true or false (Allkämper & Schatral 2005: 163). According to the interviewees in Allkämper and Schatral's study, bias is one of the reasons why they are reluctant to get in touch with rural A-class students. Furthermore, they also furnish us with another explanation as to the discrepancy between these two groups of pupils: the lack of a point of contact. B-class pupils do not involve themselves much and are little interested in Sorbian activities. The headmaster does not organize and design many courses for the B-class to be integrated in Sorbian cultural activities. For that very reason, both groups do not have much in common (2005: 164). For pupils of the B-class, the only connection with Sorbian culture is the subject Sorbian language, but many of them treat it as a burden. In a sense, the Sorbian language links both groups, but paradoxically, it separates them at the same time because they cast a critical eye on each other's performance in learning the Sorbian language. In the eyes of A-class pupils, B-class fellow pupils should have learned Sorbian well since they have been studying it for 10 years. Pupils of the B-class state disapprovingly that the Sorbian native speakers do not actually command their mother tongue as they mix it with German. Therefore B-class pupils assert that they speak better Sorbian than their counterparts (2005: 165).

However, in addition to the opinions above, one young man provides us with an

alternative perspective. During a casual talk with my informant's twin sons (April 6, 2007, in Bautzen), who are in their mid-twenties, grew up in Bautzen and attended the A-class at the Sorbian grammar school, one of them, Daniel, did not ascribe such contrast to the difference between pupils of the A-class and B-class. Instead, he interprets this as juvenile normality, so to speak: teenagers are inclined to group together fellow pupils with whom they intend to make friends. It is therefore quite natural for them to distance themselves from those who are different or toward whom they have an antipathy. In other words, even within the A-class, pupils differentiate themselves. In Daniel's view, this is not necessarily associated with ethnic attribution, but he rather sees this as a daily routine in teenagers' school life.

In sum, along the axis of city-dwellers vs. villagers and A-class vs. B-class, Anita goes through a double process of ethnicization and Othering. For her, in the instant of being circumscribed as a villager and a schoolgirl in the A-class, she is also reconstructed as another Sorb who is just becoming aware of her Sorbian-ness. Anita's identity is, according to Stuart Hall, "told from the position of the Other" (2000 [1997]: 49).

3.2 Ethnicity: The Mechanism of Inclusion and Exclusion

As already mentioned repeatedly, the element of the Sorbian language has come to the foreground in the discourse of the Sorbian ethnicity. In particular, the preservation and development of the Sorbian language was part and parcel of the context of the Sorbian "national rebirth" of the 19th century. In all of the Sorbian nationalist schemes, language continues to constitute the core of Sorbian-ness, and it has been always argued that language is the *condition sine qua non* for the existence and vitality of the Sorbian people. Ethnic intellectuals made and make every endeavor to come up with various strategies for the maintenance and promotion of the Sorbian language.[185]

Language is utilized to establish the peculiarity with which ethnic minorities resist the hegemony of the majority language (Dittrich & Radtke 1990: 23). The Sorbian language has been symbolized as a force of resistance to German assimilation. Furthermore, the Sorbian language has also been seen as one of the most distinctive ethnic features with which they differentiate themselves from the Other – the Germans. In this sense, the Sorbian language has been accentuated as the boundary-marker between the Sorbs and the non-Sorbs, meaning the Germans. Language is therefore considered to be their central strategy for accomplishing their ethnic identity. On this Sorbian ethnicity is grounded (see Köstlin 2007: 33). Therefore, the preservation of language is accorded importance and illustrates that the striving toward homogeneity also connotes a thrust toward exclusion. Moreover, the maintenance and fostering of language are considered to be the "control mechanism of the in-group" (Köstlin 2007: 33).

In this process, people who do not have shared cultural norms, values, identities with other group members are excluded, since the idea of commonality is to render visible all of those who fail to maintain something in common. As my cases show, however, those placed outside are not "foreign strangers", but rather "strangers in their

[185] See Chapter 2.2.

own society", meaning women. Inherent in ethnicity, language is enacted as the controller for inclusion and exclusion: Some women are of Sorbian origin but can not speak their "mother tongue", while others have no Sorbian ancestry but master the Sorbian language and do not pass the language to their children. Still others marry Sorbs but do not learn the Sorbian language and cannot speak it. The norm and the belief against which my informants stubbornly stand, in retrospect, is ingrained in the term of the "*serbska mać*" (Sorbian mother). This term was coined in the Sorbian nationalist projects in the 19th century.[186] The notion defines what a "Sorbian mother" is and does, and yet paradoxically it also constrains what a "Sorbian mother" should be and do. The roles and the responsibilities of Sorbian women are not only defined in this idea, but this concept also circumscribes what a "proper Sorbian mother" is. Under the banner of the nationalist discourse, the "right" maternal duties have been repeatedly produced, reproduced and reinforced by the pronouncements of the ethnic intellectuals. Among others, one of the most important duties a "proper" Sorbian mother should carry out is to bestow on her decedents the Sorbian language loaded with national value. Accordingly, in the first two parts of this section, I am going to show how my informants are positioned within the Sorbian ethnic discourse, particularly when they are installed into an *a priori* essentialist framework as "proper" Sorbian women and mothers. I will discuss how these can be seen as "forced identities", suggesting that the construction of womanhood goes hand in hand with that of Otherness at the intersection of gender and ethnicity.

As seen in the other case studies of the life experiences of several informants, which I will scrutinize in the following, the women interviewed enhance and assert their Sorbian sense of ethnic belonging and identity, in which they see themselves as members of an ethnic group living in a society where they are seen as an ethnic minority, by reverting to the idea of an origin and certain somewhat "innate" features that symbolize "Sorbian-ness", such as homeland. In the Sorbian case, self-ethnicization, which is seen as part of ethnicity, not only gives their ever-inferior ethnic belonging a more positive meaning, but it can also be interpreted as a strategy with which they survive in a society where they are ethnicized as Others. Immigration studies in Germany help us to discuss this aspect of ethnicity. Within immigration studies in Germany (e.g. Bommes & Scherr 1991; Heckmann 1992; Ha 2000; Scherr 2000), self-ethnicization is generally understood as a process in which immigrants assign themselves to an ethnic group with a unified culture. They enclose themselves with one certain sense of belonging and tie themselves down to one certain life world. In his essay "Ethnizität, Differenz und Hybridität in der Migration: Eine Postkolonial Perspektive" (Ethnicity, Difference and Hybridity in Migration: A Postcolonial Perspective) (2000), the Vietnamese-German political scientist Kien Nghi Ha tells us that, in addition to the *Fremdethnisierung*/foreign ethnicization caused by the immigration policy of the receiving country, racialist stereotypes, multicultural folkloristic discourse and immigrants' self-ethnicization also contribute to a process in which various cultural identities are reduced to one single identity (2000: 378). In this sense, self-ethnicization is considered to be the reaction of immigrants after failing to become assimilated in the host society (see ibid.). Instead of assimilation, immigrants

[186] See Chapters 2.2 and 2.3 for a detailed discussion on the "*serbska mać*" in the project of the Sorbian "national rebirth".

try to establish continuity by holding on tenaciously to their own origin (Ha 2000: 379). As for immigrants constantly dealing with racialism, they are uncertain about their status as foreigners and are not recognized in the receiving society, and ethnic identity fills an important social function in their lives (ibid.). Therefore, they include themselves in a community with a longer history and a collective certainty. This can be seen as their particular individual strategy for self-affirmation and self-enhancement. By doing so, their ethnic belonging, which is loaded with inferiority, then turns into a positive self-portrait (ibid.).

German sociologists Michael Bommes and Albert Scherr (1991), who specialize in immigration studies, argue that self-ethnicization is used by migrants as a way of dealing with problems in the immigration country. Immigrants' self-ethnicization is first enhanced by being ethnicized as one certain group: An immigrants' way of life is associated with the traditions of his or her country of origin (1991: 306f.). Moreover, immigrants are expected to ethnically interpret themselves every day (1991: 307). An example for this is that immigrants are stereotypically confronted with questions concerning their origin as well as some relevant inquiries about their habits and preferences. Conversely, they stylize themselves as a mirror image which reflects the exact portrait that is rooted in the majority society. In this sense, immigrants reproduce themselves as cultural experts of their own lives and their country of origin[187] (ibid.). In sum, Bommes and Scherr understand self-ethnicization as the result of immigrants' ethnicized ascription and the ethnicized self-interpretation.

The discussion of the concept of self-ethnicization in immigration studies can lend a hand to understanding the process of the self-ethniczation of an autochthonous ethnic minority such as the Sorbs in this study. The narrative of a Sorbian-ness between the innovative discourse concerning the Sorbian culture, e.g. *So langsam wird's Zeit* (1994), and the conventional Sorbian discourse (as analyzed in Chapter 2.4) renders it visible why and how the Sorbs ethnicize themselves as a collectivity with one single culture. The answer to these questions is in the relationship and social interaction between the Sorbs and the Germans. Succinctly put, the self-ethnicization of the Sorbs can be decoded as a "survival strategy" in the German assimilation discourse. In this process, the Sorbs homogenize themselves as a complete "oneness", authenticating their culture in order to resist its destruction while distinguishing themselves from the Germans. The self-ethnicization of the Sorbs is a manifestation of Sorbian "we-consciousness" and their self-positioning and self-representation in a society where they are ascribed the status of minority. This expresses their being fully conscious of asserting their cultural difference and affirming their ethnic particularity.

However, in the process of self-ethnicization, the Self as the center of focus grows into an "ethnic narcissism" (Ha 2000: 379). "Turning to narcissism", in the words of Ha, "is ultimately only a defensive attitude, notwithstanding its partially aggressive-nationalistic performed forms of identification"[188] (ibid.). Ha further explores why

[187] Cf. Von Migranten wird eine ethnisierende Selbstinterpretation alltäglich erwartet. Das wird z.B. dann deutlich, wenn sich Migranten stereotyp mit Fragen nach ihrer Herkunft sowie mit einschlägigen Unterstellungen hinsichtlich ihrer Gewohnheiten, Vorlieben u.ä. konfrontiert sehen. Umgekehrt lässt sich aber beobachten, dass sie sich spiegelbildlich dazu als kulturelle Experten ihrer Lebensverhältnisse und ihrer Herkunftsländer stilisieren.

[188] Cf. Die Hinwendung zum ethnischen Narzissmus ist trotz seiner zum Teil aggressiv-nationalistisch vorgetragenen Identifikationsformes letztlich nur eine Abwehrhaltung.

nationalistic feeling and ethnic faith become nonnegotiable:

> Since everything else has been sacrificed, ethnic identity is then defended as the last remained sanctuary for the enhancement of feeling of inferiority through collective self-idealization and self-overestimation with every means at their disposal.[189](Ibid.)

As German scholar of Slavonic languages Walter Koschmal, who now teaches at the University of Regensburg, notes in his *Grundzüge sorbischer Kultur: Eine typologische Betrachtung* (The Essential Features of Sorbian Culture: A Typological Observation) (1995), a centripetal characteristic occupies the main terrain in the Sorbian discourse that manifests itself in narcissistic self-love. The Sorbs choose themselves as the most favored love-object (1995: 81) in order to defend themselves from the German assimilation. However, such a defensive attitude hints at a culture-based (kulturalistisch) position (see Schiffauer 1997: 147). That is to say, the cultural serves as an absolute, uncompromising and final revelation. In this sense, taking Self as a center of focus simultaneously means an "exclusion of strangers" (*der Ausschluss der Fremden*, Koschmal 1995: 81). Consequently, ethnic narcissism leaves no place for a dialog between cultures and therefore confines itself to an isolated island.

In the last three parts of this section, I will take up the question of why and how individuals, such as my informants, ascribe the Sorbian collectivity to themselves while differentiating themselves from the Germans. This also involves an "identity management" by the Sorbian leading elites, among others, the umbrella organization of the Sorbs – the *Domowina*. For the Sorbs, cohesion is accorded importance, on the grounded that they can maintain the Sorbian-ness, on the one hand; they can also resist the destruction from the Germans, on the other hand. However, this raises ambivalent responses: Some regard cohesion as an expression of a close connection among the Sorbs, while some think of it as a force of compulsion and confinement. Various strategies of my informants for looking for their self-positioning and diverse perceptions of self-interpretation ethnically unfold how self-ethnicization proceeds in the construction of the Sorbian identity.

3.2.1 Types of Exclusion I: Between Sorbian and (Non-)Sorbian/German

Vera (born in 1956) perceives herself as an individual who simultaneously has a variety of identities composed of biological, social, cultural, ethnic elements in addition to other minor, diverse identities. In terms of her origin, Vera's mother came from the Black Forest (*Schwarzwald*) and her father hailed from a suburb of Cottbus and was probably of Sorbian heritage.[190] However, as noted above, Vera does not craft her

[189] Cf. Nachdem alles andere zuvor geopfert wurde, wird die ethnische Identität als letztes verbliebenes Heiligtum zur Aufwertung von Minderwertigkeitsgefühlen durch kollektives Selbstidealisierung und –Überschätzung mit allen zur Verfügung stehenden Mitteln verteidigt.

[190] Vera has dealt with the genealogy of her family for several years. By chance, she saw a yellowed photograph (taken in 1930) of her father's aunt at the age of ninety. Vera's father, who was then 8 years old, his parents, and some other relatives and friends were in this picture. Among others, there were two thirty year-old women dressed in Sorbian traditional festival costumes. Vera does not know if these two women were the relatives of her father. Therefore she just assumes that her father was perhaps a Sorb (interview with Vera, August 23, 2002, in Cottbus).

identity around a single term, i.e. ethnic ascription, but rather locates herself in a pluralized life world in which she gathers different life experiences. In her view, her sense of belonging to the Sorbian culture is evoked by learning the Sorbian language.

Vera learned Sorbian at school starting in her first year, and she has since mastered this language. She is also a Sorbian teacher by profession. On the grounds of her long-time occupation with the Sorbian language and the Sorbian cultural life, Vera noted:

> *I always like to call the Sorbian language my second mother tongue. It is not my first, and that's a fact. It is my second mother tongue. I was a Sorbian teacher, and I am still engaged with the Sorbian language. Therefore, in this sense, I definitely admit to having a Sorbian identity.*[191] (Interview with Vera, August 23, 2002, in Cottbus)

Vera emphasizes that as the question "*Are you German or Sorb*" is not the right question for her at all. She locates herself in-between: She is a (non-)Sorb. Vera approaches her own positioning, however, in terms of her relationship to the Sorbs. This relationship is, in a sense, formed by the fact that native Sorbian-speakers expect Vera to teach her son the Sorbian language. For Vera, such an expectation puts her in touch with one layer of her identity, that of being a (non-) Sorb who has a good command of the Sorbian language but does not pass it on to her child (interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus). As seen in the case of Vera, her Sorbian identity is not a "naturalized" result of her origin of birth, but it is her choice to identify herself as a Sorb. In the word of Konrad Köstlin, "belonging to the Sorbs increasingly proves to be a decision to be made by individuals in modern times" [192] (2007: 35). Köstlin asserts that some of the "best" Sorbs come from outside because they choose to be Sorbs and reflect on their Sorbian-ness (2003: 438f., 444). For these people, a minority can offer "identity" (2007: 35).

Thus, following Köstlin's line, Vera is the one to choose to identify with the Sorbs out of her own free will. However, the question concerning the bestowal of the Sorbian language on future generations is not only posed by others but makes her recede a bit from Sorbian-ism when Sorbian Sorbian-speakers expect her to pass on the Sorbian language to her child. As Vera put it,

> *It is not my mother tongue, but I know many Sorbs who did not learn Sorbian as their native language. Nevertheless, they teach their children Sorbian. I did not, which has pros and cons. Today I do not have the guilty conscience I once had, which had to do with the whole situation of people expecting you to do it [teach your children the Sorbian language].*[193] (Interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus)

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[191] Cf. Ich bezeichne sie [die sorbische Sprache] immer gerne als meine zweite Muttersprache, sie ist nicht meine richtige, das ist nun mal Fakt; es ist meine zweite Muttersprache. So, und ich war dann Lehrerin für die sorbische Sprache, und jetzt bin ich immer noch mit der sorbische Sprache beschäftigt. So, in dem Sinne bekenne ich natürlich zur sorbischen Identität, auf jeden Fall.

[192] Cf. Seit es diese Moderne gibt, ist auch klar, dass die Zugehörigkeit zum Sorbentum sich zunehmend als Entscheidung des Individuums erweist.

[193] Cf. Das ist nicht meine Muttersprache, aber ich kenne auch viele Sorben, die auch Sorbisch nicht als Muttersprache gelernt haben und trotzdem ihren Kinder Sorbisch beibringen; das habe ich nicht gemacht, das hat Für und Wider, heute habe ich da kein schlechtes Gewissen mehr, das hatte ich aber mal, das hat aber auch mit dieser ganzen Situation zu tun, weil man das erwartet, dass man macht.

Vera's guilty conscience renders her inner struggle visible. Her tussling with this problem of what to do about instructing her son is raised, to some extent, by not having done the same as many other non Sorbian-speakers who are, however, of Sorbian origin. Not having followed others' footsteps put Vera under pressure, moreover, for Sorbs' expectations made her reluctant to tackle this question, although she is "*not a native Sorb but nevertheless, people still expect it somehow [that I speak with my son in Sorbian]*"[194](ibid.). Vera has since long dealt with this problem and feeling guilty for not meeting the Sorbs' expectations, but she has since found justification for herself. She finally decides on the answer to this long conundrum: 1) the Sorbian language is not her native tongue; 2) her child was born with handicap and therefore has learning difficulties. In Vera's account, she did not acquire the Sorbian language as her native language, rather she learned it at school. Vera therefore does not intend to instruct her son an "artificial language". She has found the resolution to this perplexity. However, in a way, she is uncertain about her explanation because she says, "*It may sound a little bit like an excuse, it can also be interpreted that way, for my part*"[195] (ibid.). But she goes on to justify herself, arguing that

> *I did not do this thing [did not teach son Sorbian language], I didn't manage it, I could not accomplish it. But I have, in order to justify it again, done what the Sorbs like to very much to expect: I have done enough for the Sorbs; I have taught many young people and children the Sorbian language. I have built up the WITAJ-model[196] with others.*[197](Ibid.)

In this process, in which my informant was under pressure for not having talked with her son in Sorbian in everyday life, Vera even avoided attending any Sorbian events with her son as far as possible: "*In the past, I sometimes did not dare to take my son to participate in Sorbian activities because I speak to him only in German*"[198] (ibid.). It is this "not speaking with her son in Sorbian" that gets Vera entangled in bewilderment and puts her under a kind of moral pressure. However, as Vera puts it, "*it was very difficult. But of course, it is up to me. Nobody expected it, nobody said anything to me, but I can feel something, there must be something wrong. Otherwise*

[194] Cf. Ich bin zwar keine geborene Sorbin, aber trotzdem erwartet man das im Unbewussten.
[195] Cf. Das mag alles ein bisschen klingen nach Ausrede, kann auch meinetwegen so interpretiert werden.
[196] WITAJ means "welcome" in English. Regardless of what language is spoken at home in a child's family, the "WITAJ-model" intends for Sorbian/Wendish to be taught in WITAJ kindergartens by applying the immersion method. The main object aims to enable pre-school aged children to be bilingual (Sorbian/Wendish and German). This WITAJ project draws inspiration from some international examples, among others, the Breton "DIWAN" (translated as "seed") project initiated in 1977. The first WITAJ kindergarten group was established in 1997 in Bautzen, Upper Lusatia, the second in 1998 in Sielow (a district of Cottbus), Lower Lusatia. (See Sorbischer Schulverein. 1998. *Zweisprachigkeit — ein natürlicher Reichtum der Lausitz*; WITAJ Zentrum. 2002. *WITAJ. Information zur zweisprachigen Erziehung*.) Along with kindergartens, the WITAJ-project is also set up at elementary schools and daycare centers for schoolchildren so that children can continue to further develop their bilingualism (http: www.witaj-project.de/deutsch/project/praxis/praxis_d.htm, accessed August 12, 2007).
[197] Cf. Ich habe das auf diesem Bereich nicht gemacht, nicht geschafft, nicht gekonnt, aber ich habe, um das zu rechtfertigen wieder, was die Sorben so gern erwarten, ich habe genügend für die Sorben gemacht, ich habe sehr viele Jugendliche und Kinder ausgebildet in Sorbisch, ich habe WITAJ-Modell mit aufgebaut.
[198] Cf. Ich habe mich manchmal früher nicht getraut, mit meinem Sohn auf eine Sorbische Veranstaltung zu gehen, weil ich mit ihm Deutsch spreche.

you would not feel bad, right?" [199](Ibid.) Such pervading tacit moral pressure is a consequence of the fact that Vera does not teach her son Sorbian because this does not correspond with her reality. A Sorbian mother should transfer the Sorbian language to her children – that is already pre-defined and invested with meaning in the conventional Sorbian discourse. Framed in the received view, Vera is seen by the Other. She is in the gaze of the Other and she is constituted as an object before she, as a subject, finds her own way of interpreting such bewilderment.[200]

Another informant, Petra (born in 1947 and grew up in Potsdam), whose ancestors were Protestant pastors for six generations, one of whom once delivered a sermon in Sorbian, was confronted with similar problems as Vera (interview with Petra, September 23, 2003, in Bautzen). Since 1977, Petra has worked in Bautzen (she is currently unemployed). She married a Sorb and worked in a Sorbian-related field where she learned some Sorbian for her job only. Her vocabulary is growing but she cannot really speak Sorbian (she is currently learning the Sorbian language). "Not learning Sorbian" and "not being able to speak Sorbian" led Petra to the same feelings as Vera had: "*I always had a guilty conscience*"[201] (ibid.). At the same time, a tacit, unspoken interrogation and negation lurks in the interpersonal relationships Petra has with native Sorbian-speakers: a kind of distance. For example,

> *the Sorbian women whom I do not know well personally and with which I am not closely acquainted I sometimes see at a reading or concert. I always notice that there is a bit of a distance, because they know me; they know that I married a Sorb but have not learned the Sorbian language properly.* [202] (Ibid.)

Petra added that not everybody keeps their distance from her. It depends on their character. Some make it plain to Petra that they will treat her with reserve, while others do not.

As the cases of Vera and Petra make clear, both of them have gone through the same processes. First, they feel guilty about not having met the native Sorbian-speakers' expectations – not teaching their children the Sorbian language and not learning the language themselves. Second, such expectations put them under pressure, which is especially evident in the public domain where Sorbs get together at Sorbian events or activities, such as a reading or concert. These encounters, which are based on language, discourage Vera to take her German-speaking son to "Sorbian" social gatherings or make Petra feel excluded from the "Sorbian" circle. Questions concerning these two cases are thus raised as to why they have a guilty conscience because they did not teach or did not learn the Sorbian language and where such pressure comes from.

The answer to these two questions is that my informants deviate from the

[199] Cf. Das ist sehr diffizil gewesen; aber es liegt natürlich an mir, es hat keiner erwartet, es hat keiner was gesagt, aber es muss doch ein Gefühl da sein, das irgendwas nicht bestimmt, sonst würde man sich doch nicht so schlecht fühlen, nicht?

[200] See Bauman (1990b) for an analysis on the sociological theory of morality.

[201] Cf. Ich hatte immer ein schlechtes Gewissen.

[202] Cf. Bei den Sorbinnen, die ich nicht jetzt so persönlich kenne, [...] aber die entfernter sind, die loseren Kontakt, mit denen ich loseren Kontakt habe, oder die ich mal treffe auf Lesungen oder ein Konzert, da merke ich immer, dass da die Distanz so ein bisschen ist, weil die kennen mich, die wissen ich habe einen Sorbe geheiratet, aber nicht richtig Sorbisch gelernt.

widespread notion of Sorbian ethnicity inherent in the overemphasis of the preservation, transferal and promotion of the Sorbian language. Such thinking actually denotes a lack of ambiguity in which there is no place left for "difference": A (non-) Sorbian-speaking mother who talks with her son in German, or a German who married a Sorb but cannot speak Sorbian. Under such circumstances, Vera, her son, and Petra are "naturally" ascribed as Others as opposed to native Sorbian-speakers. This also connotes that those put on the outside are forced to choose either to be Sorbian or German. If those excluded do not adjust themselves to the established norm, their counterparts put them under pressure. Such pressure is the product of forced identity and a closed homogenous culture. As illustrated in an earlier chapter [203], the conterminous congruence between group, culture, language, society makes people such as Vera not have the courage to bring her German-speaking son to participate in Sorbian events because it appears odd to the Sorbian surroundings: The order (speaking Sorbian) is disturbed. Taking this a step further, someone like Petra who upsets the norm (someone who marries a Sorb should learn the Sorbian language) is treated with remoteness as she does not belong to "us" – the Sorbs. Furthermore, the ascription of Vera and Petra as Others is also constructed in the process, and on this ethnicity is based, i.e. homogenization and differentiation (see Römhild 1998: 152). Seen by Sorbian Sorbian-speakers, my informants are "differentiated" on the grounds of their "different" ways of dealing with the Sorbian language. At the same time, through the actuation of the mechanisms of ethnicity – as the order of inside and outside (Dittrich & Radtke 1990: 16) – Vera and Petra are left outside.

But as to the posed question, "Why do you not talk with your child in Sorbian", Vera always believed that she indeed needed an explanation in the past and that she had to justify herself. Now, however, she has changed her mind. She has realized that it is hard for her son, as a handicapped person, to acquire this language as a second language. In Vera's mind, it is already enough that her son can say a few Sorbian words, sing a few Sorbian songs and appreciates what the Sorbs are, knows where Vera works and knows Vera's Sorbian friends. Now, Vera finds out her answer: "*I do what I want to do, and do what I believe I can do. If I cannot do this [talk Sorbian] with my son, then I'll do something else*"[204] (interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus).

3.2.2 Types of Exclusion II: Between Sorbian and Sorbian

During my interview with Sonja (born in 1974), particularly when we talked about her family and her mother, a despondent atmosphere lingered in the air. So oppressive was the situation that we sat in silence for a while. I even felt the air was freezing when I posed the question why she feels that she is not a proper Sorb, as she had told me at the very beginning of our talk (interview with Sonja, August 14, 2002, in Dresden). As a novice in conducting interviews in ethnography then, I was at a loss for what to do next. After a short while, I tried to prompt her to make her continue to do the talking.

Sonja's parents are Sorbs, but her mother was unable to speak Sorbian while she was growing up (now she can). Accordingly, they did not speak Sorbian at home. Sonja

[203] See Chapter 1.1 for a discussion on the concept of ethnicity.
[204] Cf. Ich tue halt das was ich möchte, und was ich glaube, zu können, und wenn ich mit meinem Sohn nicht kann, dann mache ich eben was anders.

was born and grew up in a German village in Upper Lusatia. As a teenager, she did not have any contact with Sorbian-speaking teenagers because she could not speak Sorbian until she transferred to the B-class at a Sorbian grammar school in Bautzen when she was in the ninth grade. When she was done with school, she deliberately left the Sorbian area and went to study in Dresden, and since then she has lived there. Sonja further elucidates that this situation has to do with her father's family. Sonja and her brothers have actually been brought up in a more liberal way, as opposed to a strict Catholic and Sorbian upbringing. Her father hails from a strict Catholic Sorbian family, but he has never attempted to keep Sonja and her brothers in the rigorous frame of Sorbian-ism. However, Sonja's father's family, especially her grandfather, has been strict with them in terms of maintaining Sorbian-ness. When Sonja, her parents and her brothers went back to her grandfather's in Catholic Sorbian Lusatia for a family celebration and reunion, she felt

> W*e were then, in a way, my brothers and I, somehow still outsiders, as always, because we simply spoke no Sorbian. My grandfather greeted me and said to me in Sorbian immediately, 'Speak Sorbian.' Consequently, I have never built up a relationship with my grandparents. […] They have never really accepted that my mother spoke German. That is why I have never felt comfortable there and never want to establish any relationships. Maybe that's why I kept myself totally away from it very consciously.* [205] (Interview with Sonja, August 14, 2002, in Dresden)

In comparison to Vera and Petra, Sonja and her mother were located by the Sorbs, e.g. Sonja's grandfather, in the category of non Sorbian-speaking Sorbs. Simultaneously, their inability to speak Sorbian was seen as intolerable. The reaction of Sonja's grandfather can be decoded as an expression of negation and non-recognition of the Other within their family, within their ethnic collectivity. The Other, notwithstanding their Sorbian origin, are rejected to the extent that they do not fit "our" definition of Sorbian-ness: speaking Sorbian. Furthermore, the Other can be compelled to speak Sorbian, especially when the Other is in a position of disadvantage, standing in opposition to power, for instance, Sonja, as a granddaughter confronts her grandfather who wants to put Sonja in the frame of Sorbian-ness imperatively. Sonja, powerless as such, chooses consciously to distance herself from Sorbian-ism by dint of relocating to Dresden.

Sonja delineates her feelings of inhibition regarding getting along in Sorbian surroundings. She also mentions that her mother is left outside Sorb-dom since she, as a Sorb, could not speak Sorbian like people thought she should have been able to. Sonja's mother is of Sorbian descent but was incapable of speaking her "mother tongue" in an essential sense (i.e. a Sorb speaks Sorbian, can speak Sorbian and should speak Sorbian), and spoke German only. This fact as such runs counter to the Sorbian

[205] Cf. Wir waren dann immer irgendwo, meine Geschwister und ich, irgendwie, immer noch die Außenseiter, weil wir eben nicht Sorbisch gesprochen haben. Und mein Großvater, der hat mich begrüßt, und mir gleich eben auf Sorbisch gesagt, „sprich Sorbisch". Ja, und das war, ich hatte zu den Großeltern auch nie eine Beziehung aufgebaut. [...] sie haben auch nie richtig akzeptiert, dass meine Mutter deutsch gesprochen hat. Aufgrund dessen, habe ich mich da nie wohl gefühlt, und haben da auch nie eine Beziehung aufbauen wollen, und wahrscheinlich deswegen habe ich [mich] da auch rausgehalten, also ganz bewusst.

discourse as Sonja's grandfather contends it. Moreover, it remains "unspoken" that Sonja's mother, who is examined in the frame of the ideal Sorbian maternal figures, is unqualified to be a Sorbian mother, as she is considered unable to educate her children ethnically and nationally by dint of the transferal of the Sorbian language, which has been always regarded as the core of the Sorbian nationalist scheme. In this sense, Sonja's mother is thus rendered an Other who threatens the preservation of the intact bulwark of Sorb-dom.

Julia (born in 1983) also tells the story of her mother, who hails from a German family. Julia's grandmother played the gate keeper in safeguarding Sorbian-ness when she met her future daughter-in-law (Julia's mother). As she phrased it, "*nothing else, only Sorbian*" [206] (interview with Julia, August 17, 2002, in Bautzen). Julia's mother then began to acquire the Sorbian language, as she realized that it could not go any further if she did not learn it. Thus, the mother of this younger informant approached the language, and later she even became a Sorbian teacher at school. In this way, Julia added, "*now the whole family is actually pure Sorbian*" [207] (ibid.). This "pure Sorbian" is seemingly a central value that the mother-in-law strived to uphold. Nobody was allowed to disturb this central principle – speaking Sorbian – in this family.

As the above cases illustrate, the Sorbian language has been accorded primacy in the rooted prevailing view of ethnicity in the Sorbian discourse. In the meantime, it has been actuated as a mechanism of border guarding to allow those equipped with the ability of speaking Sorbian through the threshold while others are rejected and excluded. As German social anthropologist Konstanze Glaser has put it,

> Language plays a key role in the all-embracing identity-producing narratives and in official efforts to preserve Sorbian-Wendish culture. However, it considerably relativized through articular local conditions and personal circumstances at the level of one's subjective declaration as well as in the gate keeping in everyday social life.[208] (Glaser 2001: 90f.)

This "gate keeping" is especially pertinent to my point here because it implies that women, such as the mothers of my informants, are "Othered" as objects within their own collectivity. This is what the Iranian-German sociologist Farideh Akashe-Böhme suggests in her book entitled *Frausein-Fremdsein* (Being a Woman-Being a Stranger) (1993). The author asks how do women become strangers in their own culture? To this she answers:

> The dominant culture is patriarchal, and in this culture, women are and remain *Fremde* (strangers). They are seen as strangers and also treated as strangers. The world and the way it is organized is thought and established from a male perspective and for men's needs.[209] (1993: 31)

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[206] Cf. Nicht anders, nur sorbisch.
[207] Cf. Jetzt eigentlich ist die ganze Familie rein sorbisch.
[208] Cf. Sprache spielt in der übergreifenden identitätsstiftenden Narrativen und in offiziellen Bestrebungen zur Erhaltung der sorbisch-wendischen Kultur eine Schlüsselrolle, wird aber auf der Ebene des subjektiven Bekenntnisses sowie beim alltäglichen sozialen *gatekeeping* erheblich durch die jeweiligen örtlichen Gegebenheiten und persönliche Umständen relativiert.
[209] Cf. Die dominante Kultur ist eine patriarchale, und in dieser ist und bleibt die Frau als Fremde und wird von dieser dominanten Kultur als Fremde gesehen und wie eine Fremde behandelt. Die Welt, so wie

Moreover, Akashe-Böhme emphasizes in the essay with the same title that the *Fremdheit* (strangehood) of women in their own culture is an *innergesellschaftlichen Fremdheitsbeziehung* (a relationship of strangehood within society) (1995: 52). As my cases show, these women who are nevertheless already inside Sorbian society are constructed as Others under patriarchy within the Sorbian collectivity. The notion of "s*erbska mać*" is the best example of this. As I have mentioned in the second chapter, this term expresses the idea that women were persuaded by their male ethnic elites to become involved in taking up the cudgels for Sorbian "national rebirth". This also unfolds the ambivalent positioning of women within the collectivity in ethnic and nationalist projects: They are constructed as biological and cultural reproducers for maintaining and developing their culture, but in the meantime, they are excluded as Others. This twofold positioning of women signifies that women are objectified rather than treated as subjects with their own intentions and competence. When taking my informants as example, they are exactly placed in such paradoxical locations. They are forced to take an objective stance, for instance, especially when they are expected to fulfill a task for the Sorbs' sake by being confronted with a demand of compulsion ("speak Sorbian", "nothing else, only Sorbian").

Finally, this process of Othering imbued with an essentialist idea of ethnic identity is a product of a "nationalist-thinking island theory" (*nationalistisch denkende Inseltheorie*, Ratajczak 2004: 132). The Sorbian folklorist Paul Nedo, who exerts considerable influence over the definition of "Sorbian-ness", stands proxy for this "island theory". At the very beginning of his essay entitled "*Sorbische Volkskunde als Inselforschung*" (Sorbian Folklore as Island Research) of 1965, Nedo demarcates the Sorbian ethnic-linguistic territory as an island surrounded by German people. He further notes this notion of an "island" is based on numerous texts and papers written by Germans who describe the Sorbs as "a people amongst us" (*Volk in unserer Mitte*) (1965: 98). In Nedo's view, this "island-like-ness" (*Inselhafitgkeit*) has had an effect on the general Sorbian ethnic and linguistic development, way of life and culture in many different ways over the course of the centuries (ibid.). In addition to his analysis of the concept of "island research", Nedo advances a clear-cut view on the definition of Sorbian-ness: It is language and customs (1965: 102f.). Nedo's critics, e.g. Dirk Wilking and Reinhard Kroll (1993) and Cordula Ratajczak (2004), find fault with his neat, fixed and hermetic outline of Sorbian identity because such a theory not only contrasts sharply with Nedo's real life world[210], but it also denies "the normality of cultural border-crossing as well as cultural mutuality"[211] (Ratajczak 2004: 132), i.e. there is no room for blending identities. This also implies "culture as a straitjacket"[212] for those affected within their own culture, e.g. my informants. "Cultural identity appearing as constraint"[213] fixes people in an essentialist framing of culture, while it

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sie organisiert ist, ist aus der männlichen Perspektive und für die männlichen Bedürfnisse gedacht und eingerichtet.

[210] See Chapter 1.2.

[211] Cf. Die Normalität des kulturellen Grenzgangs sowie ein kulturelles Miteinander.

[212] This term is adapted from the essay title of Ayşe Şimşek Çağlar's "Das Kultur-Konzept als Zwangsjacke in Studien zur Arbeitsmigrantion" (The Culture Concept as a Straitjacket for the Study of Immigrants) (1991: 92-105).

[213] Cf. Kulturelle Identität als Zwang wirkt (Elle 1992: 13).

also connotes that people are conceived as passive objects of culture. Under such circumstances, people such as Sonja choose to flee from this closed, hermetic culture by moving somewhere else. The naturalizing linear relationship of ethnicity and culture (see Çağlar 1991: 95f.) underlying the unitary view of culture that stresses boundedness and continuity hinders the development of one group and contains a danger of isolation (see Elle 1992: 13). The overemphasis of the Sorbian language not only reifies this bastion-like view of culture, but also gets the Sorbs caught up in a "disastrous oversimplification" (Köstlin 2007: 36). It seems as if people who can speak (the Sorbian language) exist (ibid.). To conclude with Köstlin, "There is something more – nonverbal. People know more and are more when they can express themselves verbally, whether they are a minority or not"[214](ibid.).

3.2.3 "I Cannot Say I am German…"

With clarity and determination, Angela (born in 1951) defines herself in terms of her ethnic identity: "*For my part, first, I am Sorb. That is why I speak Sorbian, it is natural. It is why I have a feeling of belonging; it is very simple, my family, or our family, is a Sorbian one*" [215](interview with Angela, August 20, 2002, in Bautzen). Furthermore, Angela charts her Sorbian identity on the map of emotional relationships:

> *I cannot identify myself as a German. Although I have quite intensive relationships to the German culture, it has to do with an emotional relationship. […] I think for that very reason, I understand what role it plays, which is not [only] an emotional tie, on the other hand, but also one in my head.* [216](Ibid.)

Therefore, she asserts that "*basically, I cannot say I am German. I am a Sorb, in principle*"[217](ibid).

As stated above, Angela positions herself within an ethnic realm that has clear boundaries. She explicates her own version of ethnic identity by noting three points as follows. First, the origin: "*I mean, as far as origin is concerned, in any case my family is Sorbian, and so is my extended family. And I feel myself, as I have mentioned, whether now in the language or I just feel at home*" [218] (interview with Angela, September 24, 2003, in Bautzen). Second, Angela is a teacher who works at Sorbian grammar school in Bautzen. Her experience of getting along with pupils at school points the way toward the emotionally charged map:

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[214] Cf. Aber da gibt es mehr – das Nonverbale. Menschen wissen mehr und sind mehr, als sie sprachlich ausdrücken können, ob Minderheit oder nicht.

[215] Cf. Für meine Person, ich bin zuerst eine Sorbin, warum, warum ich Sorbisch spreche, das ist natürlich. Oder warum ich zugehörig fühle, es ist ganz einfach so, meine, unsere Familie, ist aus einer sorbischen Familie.

[216] Cf. Ich kann mich nicht als Deutsche identifizieren, obwohl die eine sehr, ich denke schon, auch wenn ich recht intensive Bindungen habe auch zu deutscher Kultur, aber das hat ja auch etwas mit einer emotionale Bindung zu tun. [...] Ich glaube von Grund her, verstehe ich das schon eine Rolle, nicht dass sie emotional festgelegt ist, auf anderen Seite, von Kopf her auch.

[217] Cf. Grundsätzlich, ich kann nicht sagen, dass ich Deutsche bin, ich bin grundsätzlich Sorbe.

[218] Cf. Ich meine von Herkunft her, auf jeden Fall. Meine Familie ist Sorbisch, und meine Großfamilie auch. Und ich fühle mich, wie gesagt, ob ich jetzt in der Sprache oder fühle ich eben da zuhause.

> *When I am in an A-class, that is, when I am in a Sorbian class, I feel more likely to be included. And by comparison, when I am in a German class, I feel myself intellectually challenged, to be sure. That is, they are strange, they are strangers to me. And I feel I can get to pupils in Sorbian class, somehow. It is always like a positive discussion, as in a scholarly manner. I think this because in a Sorbian class, I feel, in any case, as if I were in a big family. If one of my pupils in Sorbian class makes a mistake, I feel I would be very sorry for that. It is different in German classes. I am saying that children are certainly the same. You are sorry for that, too, and on the other hand, you are happy for them. But I do not have an emotional relationship to the children in German classes*.[219] (Interview with Angela, September 24, 2003, in Bautzen)

Third, in comparison with the aforementioned factors, which are propelled by emotional attachment, Angela points out a rational aspect:

> *One rational dimension, I surely have to say, is that I feel myself to be a Sorb because I know the history of the Sorbs, and that influences me as well. The Sorbs have never been a ruling people, but rather a people that has been dominated by another nation.*[220] (Interview with Angela, September 24, 2003, in Bautzen)

In my reading of Angela's draft of her ethnic identity, I was under the impression that she embeds her Sorbian identity chiefly along an emotional line. In the course of her talk, she expresses her sense of belonging to the Sorbs by continually saying "I feel…". Therefore I assume that Angela considers herself a Sorb dominantly out of an emotional bond, although she also has a relational account for why she feels united with the Sorbs. The Sorbian language, origin, family and history of the Sorbs are the *point d'appui*, on which Angela crafts her Sorbian identity. Among other things, what I see unfolding in the case of Angela is a common ancestral origin that plays a major role in her identity construction. It is exactly this "natural tie" that binds Angela together with the group of people who have the same descent, language, history as she does. Her work place, a Sorbian grammar school, furnishes a field for her to cultivate this strong, "natural" affiliation with her Sorbian compatriots, for instance, her pupils who are of Sorbian heritage. Additionally, for Angela, parents of Sorbian pupils and the Sorbian intelligentsia also belong to the Sorbian family. As she put it,

[219] Cf. Wenn ich in einer A-Klasse, d.h. wenn ich in einer Sorbischen Klasse bin, fühle ich eher aufgenommen, und dagegen, wenn ich in einer deutschen Klasse bin, fühle ich mich allerdings intellektuell herausgefordert, das ist, wie so ein, die sind fremd, sie sind Fremde für mich, und ich habe auch mich das Gefühle, dass ich dort die Schüler, dass ich die, irgendwie, packen kann oder packen schon, dass ich die nicht, das ist immer wie so eine positives Auseinandersetzung, wie in einer, wie in der Wissenschaft, denke ich mir so, denn in der sorbischen Klasse, fühlt man sich wie in, fühle ich mich jedenfalls wie in einer großen Familie, und wenn ich dort, oder wenn dort ein Schüler ein Fehler macht, so empfinde ich das immer so, als würde das mir sehr leid tut, und in deutschen Klasse, es ist nicht ganz so, ich meine, natürlich sowie die Kinder eben sind, tut einem das auch leid, und auf der anderen Seite freut man sich natürlich für die Kinder, aber diese emotionale Bindung zu den Kindern nicht.

[220] Cf. Eine rational, muss ich natürlich auch sagen, dass ich mich als Sorbin fühle, denn, ich kenne die Geschichte der Sorben, und das prägt auch, dass man nie ein Herrschaftsvolk ist, sondern eher ein Volk, dass eine andere Nation als Herrschaft über sich hätte.

> *Above all, there is this big family. And one thing also plays a role: the entire Sorbian intelligentsia comes from our school. Therefore we meet each other now and then, for example, when students have get-togethers, or when the Sorbian intelligentsia meets, for example. We more or less share the same roots.*[221] (Interview with Angela, September 24, 2003, in Bautzen)

Roots, these Sorbian roots, or more accurately and appositely put, the idea of the same ethnic and cultural roots is deeply entrenched in Angela's version of ethnic identity. Speaking from such position, Angela differentiates people of Sorbian origin from Germans. This is exemplified by her experience of getting on with Sorbian and German pupils. For her, Sorbian pupils are her family, and she also feels that she is one of them, while German pupils are strangers with whom Angela can not build up emotional relationships. Furthermore, she understands such a difference by drawing a line between an emotional attachment with Sorbian children and the rational confrontation ("intellectual challenge" in the words of Angela) posed by German pupils.

To sum up, the decisive element for Angela's embedding herself in the Sorbian collectivity is origin. Origin can have two meanings: 1) It can have a sense of pseudo-family, or common descent; 2) it can have a transferred sense of a collective location in a specific history and tradition (Römhild 1998: 137). Origin lends Angela an emotional connection to her fellow people (e.g. her Sorbian pupils and their parents, the other Sorbian intelligentsia). Moreover, origin contains family and roots, through which Angela defines her ethnic identity. Furthermore, in Angela's eyes, shared history connects her with her numerous unknown fellow Sorbs, although the Sorbs have never had a glorious past, but instead only a history of defeat, conquest and assimilation by the Germans. For Angela herself, this self-ethnicization turns the feeling of inferiority inherent in the Sorbian history into a positive self-positioning: "*I am proud that I am Sorb*"[222] (interview with Angela, September 24, 2003, in Bautzen).

Ina (born in 1968) takes a similar stance in terms of her ethnic identity as Angela does. For Ina, demarcation (*Abgrenzung*) is a central concept uses to define herself as a Sorb rather than a German:

> *I cannot say that I am German. Mostly when I am abroad and people ask me who I am and where I come from, or something like that, I say, I come from Germany. I never say, I am German. […] This distinction is important.*[223] (Interview with Ina, August 21, 2002, in Berlin)

In this regard, Ina advances the same view as Angela does: Origin is the key factor that keeps Ina on this single way to her ethnic identity. Furthermore, Ina clarifies why she views herself as Sorb by noting that

[221] Cf. Vor allen Dingen, aus dieser Großfamilie, und dann spielt auch eines eine Rolle, die gesamte Sorbische Intelligenz, die kommt aus unserer Schule, und daher treffen wir uns auch öfters wenn, ob das beispielsweise, jetzt die Studententreffs sind, oder Treffen der sorbischen Intelligenz, oder der gleichen, jedes Jahr, also man hat irgendwo gemeinsame Wurzeln.
[222] Cf. Ich bin stolz darauf, dass ich Sorbin bin.
[223] Cf. Ich kann nicht sagen, ich bin Deutsche, ich sage am meistens, wenn ich im Ausland bin, die anderen fragt, wer bist Du, woher kommst Du, oder so, ich sage, ich komme aus Deutschland, ich sage nie, ich bin Deutsche, [...] diese Unterscheidung ist wichtig.

> *Germans make no difference between nationality and citizenship. That is to say, you are German in the meaning of the German constitution, meaning I am German according to the German constitution. But for me, there is certainly difference between nationality and citizenship. Therefore, I do not say I am German because that would be referring to the concept of nationality. I have to say that I am Sorbian. And as to my citizenship, I say I am German because I was born in Germany, or I live in Germany, or I have German citizenship. To sum up, in the context of citizenship, I speak of being German, whereas in the sense of nationality, Sorbian.*[224] (Interview with Ina, November 11, 2003, in Berlin)

Ina's definition of her ethnic belonging in a way continues the established formulation of the former *DDR* – "*deutscher Staatsbürger mit sorbischer Nationalität*" (German citizen with Sorbian nationality) (see Höhne-Porsch & Hoppe 2005: 194; Ratajczak 2004: 155). But the act of distinguishing national ascription from citizenship suggests a counteraction to the homogenization in the framework of the German nation state, as Ina asserts,

> *It is not necessary to make everything the same, but many things are leveled or many things are equated. This is continually done in order to supposedly make everything easier and clearer. But as far as I am concerned, you have to make distinctions where you can and where it is possible to do so.*[225] (Interview with Ina, November 11, 2003, in Berlin)

Ina interprets her need for differentiation between being a Sorb and a German as the "intention of drawing a distinction" (*eine Sich-Abgrenzen-Wollen*). But as she emphasizes, her claim of being different does not convey a message to Germans, but rather attempts to disrupt the linear narrative, in which the Sorbs are installed into the unitary framework of the German nation state. It is also in this process of homogenization that the Sorbs are ignored and passed over unnoticed.

Following Ina's line of thought, an evident espousal of a crisp differentiation between German nationality and Sorbian ethnic ascription occupies a major space in the construction of her identity. For Ina, such a demarcation accords her importance because she believes, by demarcating herself, she can dissociate herself from the hegemonic homogenization of German culture. Her sense of being a Sorb is at first rendered visible when she is abroad and confronted with questions regarding her origin. The inquiry "Where do you come from?" seems pretty common to most people, but to Ina it spurs an urge to distinguish between the notion of "being a German" from the idea of "coming from Germany", "living in Germany", or "being born in Germany". It

[224] Cf. Die Deutsche machen ja wohl keine Unterschied zwischen Nationalität und Staatsangehörigkeit, also Du bist Deutscher im Sinne des Grundgesetzes, ja, also wäre ich Deutsche im Sinne des Grundgesetzes, aber für mich gibt schon eine Unterschied zwischen Staatsangehörigkeit und Nationalität. Und deswegen sage ich, nicht dass ich Deutsche bin, sondern das wäre ja von dem Nationalitätsbegriff, sondern da muss ich dann sagen, ich bin Sorbe, und von der Staatsanghörigkeit, kann ich sagen, also ich bin gebürtig aus Deutschland, oder ich wohne in Deutschland, und so, oder ich habe deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit, oder so etwas, also im Zusammenhang von Staatsangehörigkeit, spreche ich oft von Deutsch, im Sinne von Nationalität von Sorbisch.

[225] Cf. Man muss nicht unbedingt alles gleich machen, aber es wird so, vieles gleich gemacht oder vieles gleich gesetzt, immer fort, um es angeblich einfacher zugestalten und verständlicher zu machen, aber ich finde man muss auch differenzieren, wo man differenzieren kann und wo es möglich ist.

is interesting to note that her need to draw a distinction is not prompted within Germany, but rather in foreign countries. Implicitly, this echoes what Ina says about there being no difference between nationality and ethnic ascription in the German context, which is particularly evident in the *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*/the German constitution.

In the preamble to the German constitution (article 116, paragraph 1), it is *das Deutsche Volk* (German people) who are defined as Germans, premised on the basis of *ius sanguinis*. All people of German descent are enclosed in the category of *das Deutsche Volk*, including *Flüchtling* (refugees), *Vertriebener* (displaced persons) and their families.[226] But, as German sociologist Ulrich Bielefeld states, it is actually neither interpreted nor clarified whether the term "*Deutsche Volk*" is understood as "*Volk aller Staatsbürger*" (people of all citizens), or imagined as "*eine ethnische bestimmte Gemeinschaft*"(a community defined by ethnicity) (1992: 116f.). This implies that "*Deutsch-sein*" is inherited, or "naturally" reproduced (Bielefeld 1992: 117). That is also to say that the Germans define *Staatsangehörigkeit* (nationality) in terms of origin, and therefore the members of the *Nation* (nation) as a "natural" unity (Rätzhel 1997: 96). Encarnaión Gutiérrez Rodríguez, a scholar of Gender Studies, voices her criticism against this "obstinate connection of 'nation' and 'ethnic group'" (hartnäckige Verbindung von "Nation" und "Ethnie") in Germany by making reference to the German constitution (2001: 41, 53 footnote 1). In Rodríguez's view, this is why migrants are always marked as outsiders even though they were born in Germany and have never left this country (2001: 41). As Rodríguez puts forward, the label "foreigners"[227] does not simply describe people from abroad, but rather marks an exclusion from the hegemonic, ethnicly defined community of German people (ibid.). Therefore, the Sorbs, as an autochthonous people in Germany, are placed outside such a framework. In sum, Ina's intention of differentiation cannot only be seen as a counteraction against the engrained leveling under the banner of German nationalist thinking and structure, but also be considered as a manifestation of her subjectivity in defining herself.

3.2.4 The Territorialization of Ethnic Identity

As Ha points out, immigrants see their ethnic community in the receiving society as a *Heimat in der Fremde* (homeland abroad) (Ha 2000: 379). It marks a space of social relationships and ethnic economy which meets existing needs for social-cultural reproduction and representation (ibid., Ha is referring here to Heckmann 1992: 96f.).[228]

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[226] As can be found in the original text of article 116, paragraph 1 of the *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*: Deutscher im Sinne dieses Grundgesetzes ist vorbehaltlich anderweitiger gesetzlicher Regelung, wer die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit besitzt oder als Flüchtling oder Vertriebener deutscher Volkszugehörigkeit oder als dessen Ehegatte oder Abkömmling in dem Gebiete des Deutschen Reiches nach dem Stande vom 31. Dezember 1937 Aufnahme gefunden hat.

[227] In Rodríguez's study, she particularly focuses on female foreigners.

[228] This is what Heckmann terms an "*ethnische Kolonie*" (ethnic colony), which emerges in one certain space-territorial unity based on the self-organization and the structure of relationships among the immigrants. For instance, a variety of organizations (e.g. parents' association, sport clubs, etc.), political organizations or religious societies are established. The *ethnische Kolonie* provides immigrants with far-reaching economic services, such as restaurants, greengrocer's shops, hairdresser's salons, and the like. On the one hand, immigrants can receive help from their fellow countrymen and women in the structure

The ethnic community as a homeland abroad portrays a life world-organizing illustration of the promise of an ethnic identity which is grounded on an essentialist attachment to collectivity beyond historic, concrete time (ibid.). As stated above, the *Mythos Heimat* (myth of homeland) provides a "place" for the immigrants to assert themselves in the foreign country. It is this *Fremdheitserfahrung* (experience of strangehood), in which they have conflicts with the majority society, are powerless and suppressed, that makes the immigrants yearn for a blissful *Heimat*. *Heimat* is thus seen as a place that promises the immigrants harmony, emotional connection and compensation (see ibid.). Ha's analysis on why the immigrants need a *Heimat* in the process of their self-ethnicization in the receiving society provides me with a frame of reference for understanding why the Sorbs, as a sedentary ethnic minority in Germany, construct Lusatia as their "Sorbian homeland". Briefly speaking, Lusatia is considered to be the place to which the Sorbs can retreat for their self-assertion because this has been staked off as "Sorbian Lusatia" in the course of the construction of Sorbian identity. Their experience of strangehood when confronted with the Germans, being Othered in the framework of the German nation state and the "dredging of Sorbian culture" caused by industrialization (among other things, through the opencast mining for brown coal) underpin their claim on Lusatia as "their" homeland.

During a talk with one group of four young girls, Miriam, Julia, Klara and Venessa, I was told that three of them went to college or were doing job training in Leipzig, Görlitz and Cottbus respectively at the time when I interviewed them. The youngest one attended school in Kamenz. I asked them how they see their moving between their hometown in Upper Lusatia and the other places. In answer to my question, the eldest girl Miriam (born in 1981) replied by raising the issue of language usage in cities outside her hometown, which is Catholic Sorbian village (Panschwitz-Kukau). Miriam emphasized that she cannot speak with others in Sorbian in Cottbus where she goes to college. For her, the home domain serves as the terrain where "*you are allowed to simply talk as you are just used to*"[229] (interview with Miriam, August 17, 2002, in Bautzen). Miriam added, although Cottbus is an area where the Lower Sorbian language is spoken, she scarcely hears it spoken. Seen in this light, Miriam associates the language with her hometown in Upper Lusatia. The youngest girl of the group, Vanessa (born in 1985) further extended Miriam's viewpoint into a reification of the territorialization of ethnic identity:

> *For example, a German who was born in Dresden could move to Munich and feel just at home as in his or her hometown, whereas it is only here [Upper Lusatia] or in Lower Lusatia where the Sorbs live. There is no possibility for a Sorb to easily move somewhere*

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of the *ethnische Kolonie*, especially the newcomers; additionally, these ethnicly specific organizations or economic services function as deputies and representation for the interests of the immigrants. But on the other hand, such structure can hinder and prevent the improvement of the social-cultural positions of the immigrants. Heckmann describes *ethnische Kolonie* as a *Zwischenwelt* (a world in-between) because it has connections both with the new majority society and the society of origin. This *Zwischenwelt* is an attempt to solve the questions concerning migration in a new surroundings, it thus turns the *ethnische Kolonie* into a transitional situation. Steady immigration and the unity of the majority society are the preconditions for the maintenance of *ethnische Kolonie*. To conclude, Heckmann views the structure of the *ethnische Kolonie* as the mirror of acquired collective acculturation state (Heckmann 1992: 96-116).

[229] Cf. Man darf einfach wieder so sprechen, wie man es einfach gewöhnt ist.

else because there are no Sorbs there. People are thus particularly bound to their homeland.[230](interview with Vanessa, August 17, 2002, in Bautzen)

For Miriam and Vanessa, the articulation of their identities is tightly wed to the widely received criteria of Sorbian ethnicity in the Sorbian discourse – language and homeland (territory). But on a closer examination, the constituent of territory achieves centrality, as Miriam retains an idea of her hometown in Catholic Sorbian Lusatia as being linguistically bounded. Lusatia constitutes the notion of identity and belonging, while this simultaneously implies a rhetoric of exclusion (see Steyerl 2004: 164). As Vanessa's claims, Lusatia is conceived as being the only homeland of the Sorbs, and vice versa, the Sorbs only feel at home in Lusatia. Miriam and Vanessa, despite their ostensibly diverse statements, point to the same conclusion: the intimate linkage between people and place (see Malkki 1992).

In her study called "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees", American anthropologist Liisa Malkki rethinks widely shared commonsense notions about identity and territory and thus provides a key to understanding "the analytical consequences of such deeply territorializing concepts of identity for those categories of people classified as 'displaced' and 'uprooted'" (1992: 25). Malkki's discussion on the nationalized identity between people and place is pertinent to following these two young girls' identity trajectory with respect to their homeland. At first, as Malkki pinpointed, these widely received terms such as soil, roots and territory are reflected and created as part of our everyday language and also of scholarly works, but paradoxically, it is the very obviousness of these commonsense notions that "makes them elusive as objects of study" (1992: 26). It seems very natural for people to position themselves in a neatly marked place, as exemplified by the world maps in which there are no vague spaces, but which are rather clearly segregated spatially. This spatial fixity renders the national order of things normal and natural (ibid., she is referring here to Gellner 1983). Furthermore, as Malkki notes, the concept of territorialization is ingrained in our everyday language, for instance, the term "the nation" is widely referred to in English and in many other languages through such metaphoric synonyms as "the country", "the land", and "the soil" (1992: 26). In addition, the naturalization of the connection between people and place is also expressed in nondiscursive practices. To cite one example, people show their emotional ties to the soil by taking a handful from their own country or kissing the ground when setting food once again on the "national soil" (1992: 26f.). Moreover, the author advances that naturalizing the links between identity and territory is not only commonly conceived of in specifically botanical, arborescent metaphors, e.g. trees, roots, stock, but also it is also thought of in metaphors of kinship, e.g. motherland, fatherland, and those of home, such as homeland, *Heimat*. All of these metaphors denote that people are "naturally" tied to their land of origin (1992: 27f.).[231] Malkki's point of view helps

[230] Cf. Wie zum Beispiel, ein Deutscher, welcher in Dresden geboren ist, könnte nach München ziehen und sich dort genauso beheimatet fühlen, aber ein Sorbe, für die Sorben gibt es halt nur hier oder in der Niederlausitz. Und hier gibt es halt nicht die Möglichkeiten für einen Sorbe, einfach irgendwo anders hinzuziehen, weil dort ja keine Sorben sind, und deswegen ist man ganz besonders der Heimat verbunden.
[231] Also see Anderson (1983) and my discussion on *Heimat* in Chapter 2.1.

us understand why Miriam and especially Vanessa "naturally" identify Lusatia as their "exclusive" homeland.

From Miriam and Vanessa's point of view, Lusatia is a "place" – concrete, known, familiar and bounded – to which they are closely bound (Hall 1992a: 301). Places remain fixed, they are where we have "roots" (Hall 1992a: 302). This fixity and the roots, however, paralyze the girls' actual bicultural and bilingual life world. For example, Miriam comes from a German-Sorbian family, and Vanessa attended a German school. But why do they absolutize the relationship between the Sorbs and Lusatia? Although my earlier discussion (see Chapter 2.1) has already at least partially explained this, here Römhild's viewpoint – the couplet of culture and ethnicity is ideally termed as territorial unity (1998: 137) – is the answer to my inquiry. In this sense, my informants' individual life worlds are thus enclosed in this larger, more significantly unified culture symbolized by their *Heimat* – Lusatia.

3.2.5 A Dyad of Cohesion and Confinement

In the previous subsection, I mentioned how Sonja positions herself in reference to Sorbian-ness (see Chapter 3.2.2). Due to experiences with her family, Sonja chooses to shun Sorbian-ness by leaving for Dresden. For her, the Sorbs are a collectivity in which people hold together with each other tightly. For instance, she says, "*Young Sorbian people stick close together. They do many things together, also organize events on the weekend*" [232](interview with Sonja, August 14, 2002, in Dresden). In addition to the close tie with each other in terms of friendship, according to Sonja, Sorbian youths also later marry one another. In Sonja's eyes, this is a problem that "*the Sorbs wed amongst themselves, that is to say that there actually is a bit of inbreeding*" [233](ibid.). Therein lies a goal: "*the Sorbs want to stay among themselves*" [234](ibid.). Sonja further adds that they do this because

> *It is easier to continue to speak with a Sorbian partner in Sorbian. It is also easier to go on living your life in the same way as you are used to and of course to raise children in Sorbian. This is the basis for why they get married.* [235](ibid.)

In the ethnic and nationalist projects, family is constructed as the "*Herz des Volkes*" (the heart of the people) (Bresan 2002: 268, Bresan refers here to Józef Nowak). The Catholic-nationalist discourse of family, [236] among others as seen in the Sorbian religious magazine "*Katolski Posoł*" (Catholic Messanger), endeavores to construct family as a breeding ground of Sorbian traditions, values and languages (Walde 2000a:

[232] Cf. Die sorbische Jugend, die halt ziemlich zusammen, also die machen sehr viel zusammen, auch am Wochenende Veranstaltungen.
[233] Cf. […] dass sie untereinander verheiraten werden, also dass man eigentlich schon irgendwie eine Inzucht hat.
[234] Cf. Die Sorben wollen unter sich bleiben.
[235] Cf. […] einfach nur, weil es einfacher ist, mit einem sorbischen Partner weiterhin Sorbisch zu sprechen, es ist einfacher auch, das Leben so weiterzuführen und natürlich die Kindern auch Sorbisch zu erziehen, also auf diese Basis.
[236] See also Clair Wills for a discussion on the Catholic-nationalist discourse of Irish families in her "Women, Domesticity and the Family: Recent Feminist Work in Irish Cultural Studies"(2001:33-57).

151). The Sorbian family is a locus where the Sorbs can continue the life of the Sorbian *Volk* and the Sorbian language can be preserved, maintained and further developed (Keller 2000: 28). This makes the meaning of a Sorbian family all too clear.

Such closely-textured unity is not only manifested in the "inbreeding", according to Sonja it is also propelled by the cohesion among students – one floor in a dormitory in Dresden was reserved by student services (*Studentenwerk*) only for students of Sorbian descent. Another informant, Edith (born in 1958) confirmed that there was also one floor exclusively for Sorbs in the dormitory at the University of Leipzig where she had been a university student (interview with Edith, September 8, 2003, in Pließkowitz). In comparison with Sonja's assertion, Edith did not first channel the establishment of the Sorbian dorms in the direction associated with the endeavors to unify the Sorbian collectivity, but explained it through the problematic housing situation in the former *DDR* – there was not enough housing because many houses were falling apart. "The biggest problem in the history of *DDR* was the availability of living space" [237] (Merkel 1998: 17), as German researcher of cultural scholarship, Ina Merkel, who now instructs at the University of Marburg, phrased it in the book she edited "*Wir sind doch nicht die Mecker-Ecke der Nation": Briefe an das DDR-Fernsehen* (We're not the Nation's Complainers After All: Letters to the DDR's Television Broadcasting Service) (1998). Based on readers' letters to the television program PRISMA, researchers analyzed everyday life in former East Germany, including topics such as living, working, consumption and the environment (1998: 7). Among other things, as the editor notes at the very beginning of the preface, "the complaints about housing appear to be the most dramatic. Real human tragedies took place obviously" [238] (ibid.). Because of the numerous old, shabby buildings were built before 1945 and had survived World War II, people had to wait for many years to be allotted housing (Fischer 2003: 245). This is in this background for why Edith said it was easier for students to live in a dorm.

Besides this explanation above, Edith later reveals the reason why a dorm for Sorbian students was set up as the deliberate arrangement of the umbrella organization of the Sorbs: "*the Domowina wanted Sorbian students to hold together and maintain the language. And it worked*" [239] (interview with Edith, September 8, 2003, in Pließkowitz). In addition, a variety of activities and events were organized, such as harvest festivals, carnivals, readings or the like. Cohesion of the ethnic minority is thus overemphasized in order to maintain the group's vitality and longevity. As seen in the case of the Sorbs, their history, in which the discourse of being assimilated and conquered sets the tone, constitutes one of the central parts in the construction of Sorbian identity. Thus cohesion is considered to be a necessary and useful tool for acting as a bastion against the encroachments of Germanization.

Keeping all the Sorbs together has been *Domowina*'s keynote policy. *Domowina*'s undertakings can be decoded as "*Identitätsmanagement*" (identity management) (Greverus 1981, see also Römhild 1998: 151f.). In the words of Ina-Maria Greverus, in the sense of *Identitätsmanagement*, ethnicity is understood as a process in which a

[237] Cf. Das größte Problem in der Geschichte der DDR war die Verfügbarkeit über Wohnraum.
[238] Cf. Am drastischsten stellen sich die Wohnungseingaben dar. Hier spielten sich offenbar regelrechte menschliche Tragödien ab.
[239] Cf. Die Domowina wollte, dass die sorbische Studenten zusammen sind und auch die Sprache zu pflegen. Und das hat ja funktioniert.

group of people consciously use ethnic characteristics as criteria of differentiation as opposed to other groups, in order to reach certain goals in their social lives (1981: 223). This entails a political connotation of ethnicity. Therefore, ethnicity should be analyzed as an intentional act (ibid.). It aims to stabilize, confirm, defend, and improve ethnic identity, or a "we-consciousness", by selecting certain ethnic features (1981: 223f.). Ethnicity, as a collectively organizing principle, involves the constellation of the manipulation and dependence of those managed (1981: 224). Sorbian students may be objects managed by the *Domowina* but they are also acting agents who intend to obtain "we-consciousness" by applying a variety of strategies, e.g. common activities and celebrations among themselves. In terms of *Identitätsmanagement*, for the Sorbs ethnicity is considered to be an "organizational means for constructing, demonstrating, canalizing and articulating collectively bound personal interests as opposed to more or less supposedly antagonistic, ethnicly foreign surroundings" [240](Römhild 1998: 152) – the Germans.

In addition to the official arrangements made by the *Domowina*, for example, the establishment of a dorm for Sorbs only, the cohesiveness and close connection of the Sorbs also results from their structure of a "big family". As one of my informants, Johanna (born in 1961), pointed out,

> *We have a close family network among the Sorbian people, that is to say, there are several Sorbian extended families whose members know each other and have a close relationship by tradition and they know each other mutually to a greater extent.* [241] (Interview with Johanna, September 22, 2003, in Bautzen)

However, Johanna stressed that Germans also have big families and have just as large a number of relatives as the Sorbs. The only difference lies in the fact that the Sorbs have a closer connection among themselves than Germans. The nearness of such a social network, however, entails a paradox: "*One the one hand, people feel such social control is a burden; on the other hand, it is seen as help in the social network*" [242] (ibid.).

For Johanna, the cohesion among the Sorbs expresses the dyad of social control and mutual help, while in Vera's view, "*maybe somehow there's an element in this cohesion to differentiate oneself from others. It is possible that it is important and also partly functions emotionally*" [243] (interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus). When the cohesion is overextended to a certain degree, it then becomes egocentric. As Johanna criticizes, the Sorbs "*are* '*cooking in their own juice*' *– they are egotistical and only see themselves*"[244] (interview with Johanna, August 16, 2002, in Butzen). Such Sorbian-

[240] Cf. Ethnizität ist ein organisatorische Mittel zur Konstruktion, Demonstration, Kanalisation und Artikulation kollektiver verbindlicher Eigeninteressen gegenüber einer dazu mehr oder minder antagonistischen gedachten, ethnisch fremden Umwelt.
[241] Cf. [...] dass wir uns engere familiäre Netzwerk haben, im Sorbischen Volk, also es gibt mehr sorbische Großfamilien, die sich untereinander kennen, und auch aus der Tradition heraus sind da engere Bindungen und der Grad des sich Einanderkennens ist höher.
[242] Cf. einerseits ist die soziale Kotrolle, das empfindet man als belastend und andererseits aber auch Hilfe im sozialen Netzwerk.
[243] Cf. Mit dem Zusammenhalt, das mag schon sein, dass das irgendeine Komponente ist, das ist eine Komponente, um sich für das Abgrenzen, das mag schon sein, dass das wichtig ist und dass das auch emotional zum Teil funktioniert.
[244] Cf. Sie schmoren im eigenen Saft. Sie sind sehr auf sich bezogen und sehen dann auch immer nur sich.

centeredness, according to Johanna's observation, manifests itself significantly in the Sorbian newspaper:

> *As soon as someone, such as a politician, from outside comes here [Bautzen] as a guest, then, this is my opinion, why the politician is here is not important to journalists, but rather they try to get him to say something about the Sorbs. They want to report what says about the Sorbs. Does he notice us? Are we important to him*? [245] (Interview with Johanna, August 16, 2002,in Bautzen)

Vera reifies such cohesion as bounded and deleterious: "*it is really this insularism, somehow. We undermine ourselves here. We destruct ourselves, somehow, because of this confinement*" [246] (interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus). Such confinement makes Vera feel chained. As she said, "*I cannot stand it. I have to get out of it, always. No matter how. By going away, or by writing something, anything. It does not matter how*" [247] (interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, Cottbus). For Vera, visiting a German theater is also a way out of this restriction. Vera noted that she also goes to Sorbian theaters as well. But regarding theater plays, Vera specifies a noteworthy theme: feeling obligated to get involved in or take part in Sorbian-related activities and events. For example, as Vera put it,

> *I do not need to think about whether or not I can go to a German theater play and I never will. […] But I must buy a Sorbian book for myself so that our Sorbian books are sold. It's really true. Books are produced, and we are responsible for helping the [Sorbian] publishing house survive. That is to say, all of us have to buy Sorbian books. […] I buy a book because I like it, because I like the author or because I am interested in the topic, not because it is a Sorbian book, and it has to be sold. But people simply do it, that's how it's supposed to be. To a degree, I agree with it, but it should not be the only reason, then it is self-deception.* [248](Interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus)

Contrary to Vera's critical utterance that the Sorbs apparently "taken for granted" that they have a responsibility to read and buy Sorbian books and attend Sorbian activities and events, Angela believes she is, in fact, obligated to go to Sorbian cultural activities. Angela's sense of responsibility for the Sorbs has been influenced by her teachers when she was a schoolgirl (interview with Angela, September 24, 2003, in

[245] Cf. Sobald Leute von außen kommen, Politiker, zum Beispiel, hier zu Gast, dann steht, das ist mein Gefühl, für die Journalisten nicht so sehr das Fachthema im Vordergrund, weswegen der Politiker hier ist, sondern dann sind die regelrecht fixiert darauf, sagt der was zu den Sorben, und was sagt er zu den Sorben. Nimmt der uns wahr? Sind wir ihm wichtig?

[246] Cf. Das ist wirkliche dieses Inseldasein irgendwie. Wir untergraben uns hier, wir machen Selbstzerstörung irgendwie durch diese Enge.

[247] Cf. Ich könnte das nicht aushalten, ich muss da raus, immer mal, egal wodurch, durch Wegfahren, oder durch irgendwas, durch Einen-Text-Schreiben, oder irgendwas, ist egal wodurch.

[248] Cf. Ich denke darüber nicht nach, kann ich denn jetzt ins deutsche Theaterstück gehen, würde ich nie nachdenken darüber. [...] Ich muss mir jetzt ein sorbisches Buch kaufen, damit unsere sorbischen Bücher verkaufen. Das ist wirklich so. Das Buch wird produziert. Und wir sind verantwortlich, dass der Verlag bestehen bleibt, also müssen wir alle unser sorbisches Buch kaufen. [...] Ich kaufe das Buch, weil mir das gefällt, weil ich den Autor mag, oder weil mich das Thema interessiert und nicht weil es ein sorbisches Buch ist und es muss verkauft werden. Das macht man halt, das gehört sich so. Das sehe ich auch ein, bis zu einem Grad, sehe ich das ein, aber es darf nicht das Ausschließliche sein, dann ist das Selbstbetrug.

Bautzen). For her, this sense of responsibility is manifested in "doing something for the Sorbs". In other words, in the back of her mind, she tries her utmost to preserve Sorbian-ness and to contribute to the passing on of Sorbian-ness to future generations (interview with Angela, August 20, 2002, in Bautzen). Angela cited one example for me,

> *You feel responsible when there is an [cultural] event in the city, when there is a Sorbian play. Whether it interests you or not, it is something Sorbian, so I go. It is exactly the same with music or children's theater and such, simply because you feel responsible for how it is presented. As to a German play, I think about it very carefully: Will it do something for me, does it interest me? These considerations also play a role for Sorbian plays, but they are less important. It's because of my Sorbian identity.* [249](Interview with Angela, August 20, 2002, in Bautzen)

Vera's mention of the pressure to take part in Sorbian cultural activities and Angela's sense of duty toward Sorbian culture reveals the dilemma in participating in Sorbian cultural events: The events may demonstrate ethnic presence outwardly, but they serve as self-ascertainment inwardly (see Töpert 2005: 207). As seen in the case of Angela, such a sense of responsibility is an outcome of her positioning herself within the Sorbian collectivity. It is her belief that she "should" make every endeavor to maintain the Sorbian culture. For instance, she describes attending Sorbian events as her duty. Angela takes a conscious attitude toward Sorbian culture; meanwhile, her Sorbian consciousness is thus enhanced. However, interest and enjoyment in the events *per se* recedes into the background. For Vera, the archical rubric of "Sorbian" is a burden for her, and certainly it is also a form of pressure. Koschmal's viewpoint accounts for such a conundrum: "A Sorbian theater evening or a Sorbian children's play always pursue a practical function: to influence the audience's awareness and strengthen their feeling that they, as speakers of Sorbian, form a unified ethnic group"[250](Koschmal 1995: 28). This also explains why the Sorbs' process of self-ethnicization manifests itself in this dilemma.

3.3 Summary and Conclusion

How the ethnic identity of the Sorbs emerges in the interwoven processes of ethnicization and ethnicity is the central question I have tried to tease out in this chapter. The interrelationship between these processes takes place in the social interaction not only between the Germans and the Sorbs, but also amongst the Sorbs. It entails an operation of boundary-making in which inside/outside, included/excluded are defined and constructed depending on how the braided spectrum of ethnicization and ethnicity

[249] Cf. Man fühlt verantwortlich, wenn ein Angebot in der Stadt ist, wenn ein sorbisches Theaterstück, ob das jetzt einen interessiert oder nicht, das ist etwas Sorbisches, und ich gehe dahin, oder genauso mit Musik oder Kindertheater, oder so, einfach, weil man sich verantwortlich fühlt dafür, wie die dort vorstellen. Bei einem deutschen Theaterstück, beispielsweise, da überlege ich ganz genau, bringt dir das etwas, interessiert mich das überhaupt, oder das spielt bei der sorbischen auch eine Rolle, aber das ist zweitrangig. Das ist meine sorbische Identität.

[250] Cf. Eine sorbischer Theaterabend, sorbisches Kindertheater verfolgen immer auch die praktische Funktion, das Bewusstsein der Rezipienten dahingehend zu beeinflussen und zu stärken, dass sie als Sprecher des Sorbischen eine einheitliche Ethnie bilden.

shifts. Meanwhile, a process of Othering also continues. However, it is important to point out that the relationship between those who actuate the mechanism of Othering and those who are Othered is not *a priori* fixed, but is rather dynamic within different temporal and spatial contexts. It is vital to note that ethnic Others are not necessarily located in passive positions, but rather they themselves develop various strategies to deal with ethnicization. Such maneuverings are embodied in ethnicity and are their reaction to ethnicization. Within this process, the ethnic identity of the Sorbs is accordingly constructed and continues constructing as well.

Based on the life experiences of my informants, I attempt to understand how such processes of ethnicization and ethnicity contribute to raising the profile of Sorbian identity. The gaze of the Germans precipitates the Sorbs as both ethnic Others and social Others as demonstrated in the notion of "Sorbian wet nurse" and its extended connotation "life as a wet nurse" and experiences of being discriminated in the extremely rigid frame of National Socialism. However, being observed in the look of the Germans makes the discovery of Sorbian-ness possible, as can be seen in the informant who changed schools from her hometown to Bautzen. As seen in the above cases discussed in this chapter, I have predominantly focused on the negative dimension of ethnicization. However, we should be aware that processes of ethnicization, as Römhild argues, do not necessarily only involve negative discriminating forms, but could be expressed in the form of harmless folklorization (1998: 148). To put it more accurately, ethnicization covers a complex fund of attributions of ethnic identity by others: it entails not only forms of "negative discrimination" which aim to exclude some groups from national contexts and civil rights, but also those of "positive discrimination" which frequently prove to be a type of hidden exclusion (ibid.). This "positive discrimination" extends from the "de-politicized exhibition of ethnic otherness for the purpose of a multi-cultural self-portrait to the non-contemporary establishment of a native population stylized as a national monument into historically inherited self-representation[251] (ibid.). In the case of the Sorbs, they are "positively discriminated" as objects of biculturalism – German and Sorbian – in Lusatia, or they are portrayed as "exotic others" whose festivals and traditional costumes are turned into tourist attractions.

The process of Othering not only occurs in the interaction between the groups, but also within the group, for instance, women are Othered. Especially when the notion of ethnicity is conceived in a fixed term – the preservation and the promotion of the Sorbian language –, women, seen as symbolizing the cultural reproducers of collectivity, are excluded. In this sense, culture becomes a kind of straitjacket. However, culture as a constraint is an unavoidable dilemma for an ethnic minority such as the Sorbs when attempting to "survive": Self-ethnicization becomes a refuge where they look for means of self-assertion and ways to enhance their "we-consciousness" and to mark off their ethnic identity, while at the same time self-ethnicization confines group members in a kind of cultural jail.

[251] Cf. Ethnisierung umfasst [...] Formen positiver Diskriminierung, die sich häufig als verdeckte Ausgrenzung erweisen und von der entpolitisierten Zurschaustellung ethnischer Andersartigkeiten zum Zweck einer multikulturellen Selbstdarstellung bis zur gegenwartsfernen Festschreibung einer zum nationalen Monument stilisierten Urbevölkerung auf eine historisch überkommenen Selbstrepräsentation reicht.

The life experiences of my informants illustrated in this chapter reveal how their ethnic identity is constructed. Simultaneously, this is also a process of self-interpretation, self-positioning and self-affirmation. As seen in the case studies in this chapter, ethnic identity is a product of their interaction with the Germans or with their peers within the Sorbian community. Most importantly of all, ethnicity obtains new meaning in the Sorbian context, since this "individualized" ethnicity not only challenges the understanding of ethnicity as a collective process between groups and as an inherent character of the Sorbs, but also reveals it as a choice made consciously by the acting agents as exemplified in the case studies discussed. This is exactly what reaches the level of reflexive modernization: "Sorbian-ness" can be chosen and is a choice relationship (Köstlin 2003: 444). In this light, the Sorbian language is no longer absolutized as the only marker for Sorbian-ness, as the single bond with which to relate to Sorbian-ness; rather, as Köstlin suggests, spatial relationships are important: Culture, architecture, ways of communication, feasts, landscapes and also language are seen as "symbolic connections to locality" (ibid.). With this, the Sorbs can acquire Sorbian-ness afresh. Particularly those who identify with the Sorbs out of choice, such as Vera in my study, can shed light on Sorbian-ness and help develop a new logic which shows those Sorbs who identity themselves as Sorbian according to the conventional criteria beyond Sorbian culture and language (Köstlin 2003: 445).

Finally, it is important to call attention to the difference between the construction of ethnicity and everyday practices as seen in the above case studies. As noted earlier, particularly in the preceding chapter, the Sorbian ethnic and nationalist projects homogenize ethnicity and culture into a Sorbian whole. An internal difference is thus masked under the overarching rubric of Sorbian-ness. However, as seen in my informants' life experiences, ethnic identity has actually never been as homogenous as it is portrayed by the ethnic elites and activists. Their individual ways of relating to, dealing with, negotiating with Sorbian-ness have already filled Sorbian ethnicity with heterogeneity. What is more, in their everyday life, supposedly unambiguous cultural and ethnic borders are crossed, for example, Sonja's leaving the Sorbian region and moving Dresden with the intention of breaking away from ethnic boundedness, or the everyday communication between Sorbian women and non-Sorbs. What I have just mentioned has a bearing on revealing the difference between the construction of culture and the practice of culture. Barth's example of a family composed of a young Pakistani man, his wife and their son, who was born in Norway (1994a, see Chapter 1.1.4) reminds us that each of those studied as discussed in this chapter has shattered the homogeneity and exclusiveness that are central to the construction of the Sorbian cultural discourse. Their ethnic identification also discloses their positionings of culture which are products of their life experiences that are not only singular to each of them but are also continuously developing. This will be more apparent in next chapter which focuses on the practices of everyday life. Last but not least, it must be noted that ethnicity is only one part of the identities in this modern world of those being studied. Their identities are also constructed in their everyday social life. It is this everyday sociability which moves us to the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 IDENTITIES THROWN TOGETHER – EVERYDAY LIFE EXPERIENCES

Identity is neither conceived of as a fixed or static essence, nor is it absolutized in one singular from. Rather, it is mediated through a series of subject positions and sets of differences – be they gender, ethnicity, culture, or religion. These forms of differences in human social life are experienced and constructed in connection with one another. In the process of the identity construction, these elements may imbricate, or they conflict with one another. At one moment, gender acts as the defining difference, while in another, ethnicity takes priority over the social. In the process of searching for a sense of belonging, each form of difference may become differently weighted. However, as anthropologist Henrietta L. Moore points out, no particular form of difference should be allowed to have a priori dominance or significance over another because then we unavoidably run the risk of overlooking the others (Moore 1988: 196). Taking black women as an example, Moore asserts, "to be a black woman means to be a woman and be black, but the experience of these forms of difference is simultaneous, and not sequential or consequential". To paraphrase Moore's viewpoint above, in my study I will say, "to be a Sorbian woman means to be a woman and be Sorbian." As Moore further puts forth, "it is, however, clear that in specific contexts some forms of difference may be more important than others. It follows from this that the interrelations between the various forms of difference will always require specification in given historical contexts" (Moore 1988: 197).

For cultural anthropologists, the question of how all of these forms of differences are experienced in the day-to-day lives of those studied is explored in practice in everyday life. As Fredrik Barth put it, "all concepts are embedded in practice" (1994b: 356). In terms of anthropologists' epistemological access to understanding the notion of culture, Barth gives great importance to practice because he argues that ideas and concepts of culture are "images which are used when we engage the world – i.e. they are linked to contexts and purposes as well as to each other". He further underscores that "we [anthropologists] should not sever them [ideas and concepts of culture] from these connections of practice […]. We must also observe them in their range of use, as knowledge". The key to capturing the cultural conceptions and concerns of those studied is participant observation. According to Barth, participant observation can aid anthropologists in attending to "unelicitated, spontaneous materials on particular people speaking and acting in lived contexts" (1994b: 357). A central aspect of Barth's concern is to explore how, through participant observation, anthropologists come to grasp with the concepts in practice, i.e. in a real-world context, in which experiences with the practice of life are the product of interactions in social processes (see ibid.). Barth's remarks on the notion of practice are chiefly aimed to reappraise and modify the conventional concepts of culture fraught with naturalism. This not only hints at how anthropologists understand the culture of those studied and how this empowers their analysis, but it also spells out that the perspective of practice enables us to grasp the "fuller study of experience mediated by culture"(ibid.).

In this chapter, I will attempt to shine new light on how women take up their positions and approach their sense of self by looking at their day-to-day life experiences

in various social contexts. Everyday life here is considered to be an arena where people communicate and interact with one another; however, each individual's everyday life is distinguished from yet also interlinked with others' (Römhild 1998: 19). Regardless of their different occupational, political, social, ethnic and spatial background, people, acting as agents, meet each other and share with each other in an everyday life where everybody's different cultural practices are positioned and interconnected (ibid.). As Römhild states, "everyday life is thus the place, where 'culture' is mediated, exchanged and adjusted on the intersubjective level."[252](ibid.) In the meantime, "in day-to-day interactions, people enact their assumptions, conveying messages about which identities are important to them and what those identities mean" (Cornell & Hartmann 1998: 184, quoted in Feischmidt 2003: 223). In the process of constructing identities, various social factors articulate people's positions that vary in every single situation. Everyday life is a dimension of activities (Römhild 1998: 19) which provide us with a standpoint for understanding the process of identity construction. "Doing" is the focus of attention and bespeaks "practices" (see Cowan 1990: 16f.) which are the means through and the site in which identities of the women studied in this study are constructed.

In the preceding chapters, I set forth how the role of "Sorbian mother" is ascribed to Sorbian women and how certain responsibilities are also prescribed to them for the sake of the Sorbian collectivity in the Sorbian discourse. This can be seen in the conceptualization of "*serbska mać*" (Sorbian mother) in the Sorbian "national rebirth" in the 19th century and in current representations in both the Sorbian and German media. Under such assumed identities or ready-made categories, Sorbian women are turned into a stereotypical group with a homogenous culture, or a coherent way of living with a unitary structure. Women's actions, choices, strategies and experiences are, however, missing from those discourses. As mentioned earlier, everyday life is a realm where Sorbian women, as actual people, do real things. Moreover, day-to-day life practices also serve as a domain for us to observe how women locate themselves in more than one "culture" and identify themselves within wider social and political contexts that exert influence over women's life experiences. Women's lives under socialism in the former East Germany is a pertinent example of this. This chapter is premised on revealing women's lives as they are lived, and it therefore centers on experiences relating to housework, paid work, family, educating children, leisure activities, vacations, media and music. Although most of case studies in the following base on single life experience of those under study, they shed light on our understanding of other individuals of the group in question. By seeing a multitude of life contexts, scrutiny of the identity construction of the Sorbian minority will be given new weight and a novel twist.

4.1 Work

Almost all the women whom I interviewed asserted that they have self-assured lives and self-confidence. They take care of their family and work at the same time. In addition, they have no qualms about going out to enjoy activities in the evening. One of the reasons is that their husbands also do the housework – cooking, taking care of

[252] Cf. Alltag ist damit der Ort, an dem „Kultur" auf der intersubjektiven Ebene vermittelt, ausgetauscht und dynamisiert wird.

children and grocery shopping. Edith, aged 50, is usually very busy with her work, and therefore she only cooks on weekends, while her husband cooks on weekdays (interview with Edith, September 8, 2003, in Pließkowitz). Edith emphasizes that she has always lived a life of self-determination. This implies that she has never felt constrained because of her family. Her son was born when she was a 20-year-old college student. She tried but failed to take her child with her to college in Leipzig. Her husband at that time, from whom she is now divorced, thus took care of their son (interview with Edith, August 16, 2002, in Pließkowitz). Mathilde (born in 1939) is a retired school teacher of German and Russian. Her husband took care of children when she went to Moscow for further study for eight weeks in 1981 (talk with Mathilde, April 10, 2007, in Dresden; recorded in fieldwork note on April 10, 2007). When the children were still small, it was usually her husband who brought children to bed and read good-night stories to them because Mathilde, as a school teacher, had to prepare her classes for the next day (interview with Mathilde, September 29, 2003, in Dresden). Lydia (born in 1954), mother of three children, mentioned that, besides her job, she feels free to attend some activities in the evenings. She added she could have not balanced work and family if she did not have a husband who also takes care of family and children (talk with Lydia, April 8, 2007, in Bautzen; recorded in fieldwork note on April 8, 2007). The statements given by my informants above are confirmed by my observing their husbands doing housework when I was at their homes. For example, when Edith's husband drove me back to the hostel where I was staying in Bautzen, I had a casual talk with him and asked him about his occupation. He answered me jokingly, "I cook, as you just saw in our home" (fieldwork note from September 8, 2003). This was also the same with Mathilde's and Lydia's husbands: When I was at their homes and stayed with their families, I also saw their husbands doing the washing.

There are more examples that are similar to those above. It was quite normal for almost all the women with whom I talked to go to work and take care of family at the same time. One of the reasons is that their spouses also do the housework and take care of the children, but the policies toward women of the former *DDR* also played a role in women's work and family lives. As Edith put it, "*in the DDR, at least, women had their equal rights somewhere on paper*"[253] (interview with Edith, August 16, 2002, in Pließkowitz). Lydia also asserted the relevance of the equality of women in the *DDR*, while Elenore put forward that "*a woman in her family, a woman herself was actually someone, that is, a person, a person of character*"[254] (interview with Elenore, September 25, 2003, in Bautzen). My informants voiced their positive experience regarding the policies toward women in the *DDR*, on the one hand; however, on the other hand, they clearly expressed their criticism by saying, "*we were not so equal in the DDR*"[255] (interview with Lydia, October 5, 2003, in Bautzen). Moreover, what Edith described as "equality on paper" above already implies that women were merely formally equal.

In order to understand under which circumstances women in the former *DDR*, such as my informants, lived in terms of their work and family, it is necessary to sketch the *DDR*'s policies toward women. The main thesis of policies toward women of the ruling

[253] Cf. In der DDR, also war die Frau, zumindest auf den Papier irgendwo gleichberechtlich.
[254] Cf. Die Frau in der Familie und die Frau an sich war jemand, also eine Person, eine Persönlichkeit.
[255] Cf. So gleichgestellt waren wir in der DDR auch nicht.

party *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland* (the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, hereafter *SED*) in the *DDR* is based on the writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and August Babel. In their view, the principal solution to the issue of women's rights was the emancipation of women from capitalist repression (Hildebrandt 1994: 13). The work of Clara Zetkin, who was an advocate of the proletarian women movement, concentrated on the role of women. She stated that only the entry of women into waged work could make women independent of men economically and socially (Zetkin 1957, quoted in Hildebrandt 1994: 13). This was also taken as the main inspiration for the *DDR*'s policies toward women. At the center of political agendas in socialist societies, including the *DDR*, was the incorporation of women into productive activities (Moore 1988: 136). Furthermore, women were to be liberated from the "yoke" and "slavery" of housework and domesticity (Nickel 1992: 124). In general, the measures in favor of women included the protection of women and mothers, legalization of abortion, legal equality in occupational training, provisions for pregnancy, babies and mothers, childcare facilities, and the allocation priority of housing for women.

According to the German gender studies scholar Karin Hildebrandt, the *SED*'s policy toward women can be divided into the following phases: 1) 1946~1965: drawing women into waged labor; 2) 1963~1972: concentration on the further training and qualification of women; and 3) 1971~1989: compatibility of work and family (Hildebrandt 1994: 13ff.). In the first years after the Second World War, women played a major role in the *DDR*'s labor force. In the 50s, women were granted some legal rights, such as the protection of women in the labor force, the protection of mothers and child-care and the professional promotion of women. In the 60s, better equal rights in employment were regulated in the Labor Code published in 1961. Nonetheless, only 55 percent of women worked during this period of time, and most women were still in poorly remunerated sectors due to low qualifications. Consequently, in the second phase, further training and providing qualification was central. During the period of 1964~1970, numerous laws for the promotion women's qualifications and professions were passed. The incorporation of women into waged labor and the socialization of domestic jobs were seen as the key to the emancipation of women in the *DDR*'s policies toward women. However, women's double burdens of work and household duties were not alleviated. The point of departure of policies toward women in the third phase accordingly focused on balancing family and work life for mothers who worked. 91 percent of all women in the *DDR* entered the labor market in the first half of the 1980s. Nevertheless, few women held the high-level positions such as deans or department heads. Women were still discriminated in many occupational and familial spheres.

In sum, the women question was not solved in the former *DDR*. As Hildebrandt concluded, women's emancipation in the *DDR* was "from above", and women's burden of work and family was therefore not relieved (Hildebrandt 1994: 29). The analyst of issues on *DDR* women, work and family Gisela Helwig also cast a critical eye on this point. The *SED*'s policy of making work and family compatible gained foothold only by continually passing special rulings for mothers. This precipitated the reinforcement of women's traditional roles (Helwig 2003: 201). Women did 75 percent of housework (Eifler 1991: 9). Furthermore, the former *DDR*'s concept of equal rights and equality between the sexes merely concerned the "solution to the women question" rather than the emancipation of genders from the practical and symbolic hierarchical gender order

(Dölling 1993: 27). German sociologist Christine Eifler put forward that the *DDR*'s policies and central ideas toward solving the issues of women's rights were envisioned in its concept of men. In this context, despite women's employment, they were still dependent upon men (Eifler 1991: 8), and gender relations did not change. Women were required to adjust themselves to the norms set up by men and consequently to change their self-understanding and self-image (Eifler 1991: 9).

The brief description of the *DDR*'s policies toward women as sketched out above prepares the ground for understanding in which political context my informants were and are located. Their experiences as women, as mothers, and as waged labors in the *DDR* constituted one important part of their lives so far. However, each individual articulates her own position on work differently. Differences thus stand out between women in rural areas, women as workers on collective farms, women in higher (government/business) positions, women representing the collectivity of East German women, women unemployed after the Reunification of Germany, and women experiencing unequal pay be virtue of their gender and ethnicity. In the following, I will illustrate how my informants position themselves in terms of work.

4.1.1 A Sense of Collectivity – A *LPG* Woman's Life

In the rural household, women do many things. Rosemarie, a middle-aged woman from a village near Bautzen, paints a picture of rural women's life: Women do many activities and organize everything. Their tasks – housework, farm work and gardening – are nearly all-encompassing. Women do all these things, while men only make decisions (interview with Rosemarie, August 17, 2002, in Bautzen). Rosemarie coaxed a latent form of a rural woman's life into something recognizable, while Paula told me how she lives a life on the countryside. Paula was born in 1927 and grew up in a Catholic Sorbian village. She is the mother of another informant, Elenore.[256] Paula has worked on a farm since her childhood. Working on the *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft* (hereafter *LPG*, or collective farm) has constituted the largest part of her life.

Paula left home at 6:30 a.m. every morning and started to work at 7 a.m.. Eight working hours awaited her. Paula and her other brigade members, all of whom were women, worked very hard on the collective farm – hoeing and sorting potatoes, tobacco and carrots, hoeing sugar beets, stacking straw bales, and doing harvest work (interview with Paula, September 26, 2003, in Bautzen). However, in addition to her work on the collective farm, Paula also had to grow vegetables and fruits and raise livestock on the household plots. Like many of Paula's female contemporaries who worked on an *LPG*, their burden was a triple load: working on the collective farm, growing vegetables and raising livestock for household consumption, and performing domestic tasks. During Paula's day, people did not have modern electronic appliances as people do nowadays. Women thus had to do many things by hand. Paula's husband scarcely helped her with housework. She had to do everything. The case of Paula is by no means an exception at that time. In socialist societies, such as in Cuba, Soviet Union, China and Eastern

[256] When I talked about the issue concerning *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft* (hereafter *LPG*, or collective farm) with her, she suggested that I could talk to her mother who worked on the collective farm. Then I met Paula at Elenore's.

Europe, the same ideological positions – the incorporation of women into the labor force – laid a triple work load (the collective farm, their private gardens and housework) on women's shoulders (Moore 1988: 136ff.).

Paula's experience working on an *LPG* is ambivalent. On the one hand, she had to work very hard and earned a little money[257]; on the other hand, a wonderful feeling of collectivity emerged between her and her team workers:

> *We were united. Everybody was always by everybody's side. It was wonderful. But it is different nowadays. Before, all of us were the same. All were the same. But today people do not hear from neighbors, people do not see each other any more. Actually, it was a little better before*.[258] (Interview with Paula, September 26, 2003, in Bautzen)

For Paula, a sense of community appeared between her and her other female team workers because they worked together in the same brigade everyday. They not only worked on the same team, they were also neighbors in the same village, and Paula had already established a sense of community with them to some degree before the founding of the *LPG*. Taking it a step further, the "female milieu" (Hose 2004b: 36ff.) articulates the women's sense of feeling untied with one another.

In the words of the Sorbian folklorist Susanne Hose who takes up "The Meaning of 'Work' in the Life Stories of Women" [259] (2004b: 28-40) by collecting the autobiographical life stories of women (mothers and grandmothers) in Lusatia, "female milieu" refers to the gender-specific knowledge passed on by women which comprises a part of their means of communication. Furthermore, Hose emphasizes that the milieu cannot be isolated from the corresponding economic and socio-historical conditions or from the influence of contemporaneous discourse about the "correct", or "modern", way of being a man or a woman. The playing of prescribed roles also belongs to this discourse (Hose 2004b: 38, footnote 12). As Hose explores, women who worked in the *LPG*s saw their work as the main work as their lives, or vice versa, they depicted their lives as work because work played a major part in their lives since early childhood. According to Hose, working on the farm, with its hard work and low pay, accorded women a sense of dignity and self-worth – "they judged themselves and their female co-workers on how well they fulfilled their tasks as women" (2004b: 37). They did not feel discriminated as women. For them, career, housework and motherhood overlapped. They did not see any problem choosing either children or a career. Instead, during their day, marriage and children acted a medium through which women gained prestige and authority and gained new social contacts with other women. In this gender-specific sphere, women passed on female knowledge, had their female activities (such as working in the cow stall, milking, bread baking and the like) and had their "women's talk" (2004b: 38f.). As one informant Edith told me that it was typical that solely women, as was the case of her grandmother, had talks with other women at that time in

[257] According to Paula, she earned 9 Marks for one month in the first years, then 12 Marks, and at the end, she got 20 Marks.

[258] Cf. Wir waren uns einig. [...] Jeder war für jeden immer da. Das war schön, das was jetzt ist die Welt hier, ein bisschen anders. Früher wir waren alles alle gleich, alle eins. Aber jetzt hört man gar nicht mehr von Nachbarin, trifft man nicht mehr, das ist eigentlich, das war früher bisschen schöner.

[259] This study is done in the framework of a research project concerning the connection between gender and ethnicity at the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen.

the village (interview with Edith, August 16, 2002, in Pließkowitz). A sense of community among *LPG* women, according to Elenore, the daughter of a *LPG* worker, was not only raised through the relationship between team workers; moreover, it was Sorbian and Catholic. Even many years after the Reunification of Germany, this circle of women still celebrate with each other or go on outings with each other. This is a "we-feeling" only among women (interview with Elenore, September 25, 2003, in Bautzen).

4.1.2 Women in High Positions – Heads of Departments

As noted earlier, women in the *DDR* were drawn into the labor force, but female labor was mostly focused on the low-paid, unskilled, manual jobs. According to German-speaking Anglicist Hanna Behrend (1994: 38), women who were university graduates generally worked as non-professional teaching staff at universities and technical colleges, in companies, and cultural and research institutions. Women scarcely held the higher positions; if they held any, they were in nurseries and kindergartens, while the majority were at schools, outpatients' clinics, medical and other state-run counseling and administrative centers as well as in typical female sectors. It was also similarly structured in the political positions: women were mayors of small and middle-sized towns, or chairwomen in the *LPG*s or *Betriebsgewerkschaftsleitung* (*BGL*, trade union committee), or party secretaries of small or middle companies or company departments. One of my informants, Helga (born in 1935) was a minority in a minority – she headed a department in a natural sciences academic institute.

Helga is an academic and has a doctoral degree in natural sciences (she retired in 2000). Since 1960, she worked as an academic employee in a research institute. In her career, she was the only woman who reached a head position in one of the research departments in the institute, which was "*rare in this special institute*" [260] (interview with Helga, October 6, 2003, in Dresden). Helga explained to me the reason why she was promoted to head one department in the institute: It was because the work of which she was in charge was composed of numerous small tasks, and the superior of the institute needed her to perform such job. However, Helga also told me how her colleagues interpreted her promotion jokingly by saying: "*They need you* as *an advertisement. First, you have a job that not everyone wants to do right away; second, you are a woman; third, you are not in the [SED] party; and fourth, you are not a real German anyway*"[261](ibid.). Helga emphasized that her colleagues' interpretation was simply meant in fun, but, in my view, it could imply the reality to some degree.

Helga herself is not married. According to her observation of the institute, it was a double burden for a married woman to take care of a family and work at the same time.

> *My female colleagues had children, and to work and have children is quite a double burden. Work started at seven o'clock in the morning and ended shortly before 16 o'clock in the afternoon. That it to say, people had to bring their children to nursery schools, kindergartens or school before 7 o'clock. Most of my colleagues had two or three children*

[260] Cf. In diesem Institut was es selten.
[261] Cf. Die brauchen Sie als Aushängeschild. Sie [Kollegen und Mitarbeiter]haben gesagt, erstens haben Sie eine Arbeit, die nicht gleich jeder machen möchte, zweitens sind Sie eine Frau, drittens sind Sie nicht in der Partei, und viertens sind Sie auch gar keine richtige Deutsche.

and brought them to the day nursery early. This was certainly a tremendous burden for those women.[262] (Ibid.)

Helga points out the difficulties that her female colleagues were confronted with in the reconcilement of family and work. As criticized in the numerous studies on the *DDR*'s policies toward women (e.g. Helwig 1993; Dölling 1993; Hildebrandt 1994; Behrend 1994; Nagleschmidt 1994; Stecker 1997), the compatibility between career and family is rendered as fallacy. Drawing on her personal experience in the *DDR*, German academic Heidi Stecker untangles the "myth of reconcilement" (1997: 167ff.) between motherhood and work which falls into one part of the selective perception of *DDR* history. In Stecker's view, although it is a myth that women balanced family and work, still many eastern German women apply the term "compatibility" of motherhood and career to aptly characterize their previous lives (1997: 167). However, usually mothers had to lower their goals and expectations, while fathers often restricted themselves to the role of "helpers". Mothers were expected and asked to accomplish what had not been done and exhausted mothers had feelings of guilt and were loaded with toil. Stecker thus voiced her sharp criticism: The over-exploitation of women's health demonstrates that the *DDR* squeezed the last resources out of people and sold this as emancipation[263] (1997: 168).

Later in her analysis, Stecker puts forth that the notion of the compatibility between work and family harbors some questionable facts. First, why did women in the *DDR* have abortions very often and take pills more frequently than West Germans? In her view, women obviously felt a strong need to bear no (more) children in the *DDR* (ibid.). Second, Stecker addresses the phenomena of sending children to day nurseries, kindergartens and schools early. For her, the point is that women and children had to adjust themselves to work. Why was it not the reverse (1997: 169)? Third, why was the divorce rate higher in the former *DDR* than in West Germany? In East Germany, by 1985, 75 percent of all divorces were initiated by women (Borneman 1992: 67)[264]. The high rate of divorce was usually symbolized as stereotyped evidence indicating that women were independent economically and had more autonomy. However, Stecker emphatically denies the above interpretations and points out that such interpretations do not show how women overtaxed with work got along with the conformity model of "people as machines", and how their living conditions destroyed their relationships with their husbands mercilessly (Stecker 1997: 169). Finally, many spheres of everyday life demonstrated how women were of lesser value and how their wishes and need were unimportant. For instance, pregnant women had to be examined in improvised hospitals, waiting for hours without having enough places to sit. In public realms, such as train stations or department stores, there were no child-friendly facilities. Stecker concludes

[262] Cf. Meine weiblichen Kolleginnen, die hatten die Kinder, und wenn man also arbeitet und Kinder hat, dann ist eine ziemlich doppelte Belastung, und die Arbeitszeit begann früh um 7 Uhr und endet kurz vor 16 Uhr nachmittags, d.h. man musste also vorher die Kinder in die Einrichtung bringen, und die meistens meiner Mitarbeiterinnen hatte also zwei oder drei Kinder, die sie also früh auch schon in die Krippe schon gebracht haben, und das war natürlich für die Frauen eine enorme [Belastung].

[263] Cf. Der Raubbau an weibliche Gesundheit zeigt, dass die DDR die letzten Ressourcen aus den Menschen presste und dies als Emanzipation verkaufte.

[264] In West Germany, the amount of women in marriages who filed divorce made up 66 percent (Borneman 1992: 67).

that women with children were actually not welcome in the *DDR*.

Helga recognizes that gendered difference still exists, particularly in the case of women being overloaded with the burden of career and family; nevertheless, in Helga's eyes, membership in the *SED* played a key role in one's career:

> *In the institute, I think there was a difference between comrades, party members and those not aligned with any party. It was a tangent interface [if you were party member], basically. The difference between men and women was of less significance than this status. If a non-party member wanted to take up the same kind of work, then he or she had to prove that he or she was better*.[265](Ibid.)

Moreover, Helga mentioned that some women who had great academic qualifications did not progress smoothly in their careers because they were independent of the *SED*. "*It was an important crucial advantage*"[266] (ibid.) to be affiliated with the party, she said. For example, one of her friends had qualified as a university lecturer but did not belong to the *SED*. She had her problems:

> *It began with her habilitation [post-doctoral thesis]. A colleague who was a party member just took the research outcome that my friend had worked on with her doctoral and diploma students and integrated it into his own work without having written that it was the work she had done. My friend supervised the work, so she complained. They claimed they did not know that a woman could achieve something like that. In the end, he had to give her credit, but it didn't help any more*.[267](Ibid.)

The above example cited by Helga illustrates the two layers of inequality in women's careers: political inclination and sexism. This case echoes what Helga said of the *SED* membership as an advantageous device above. Additionally, women were still discriminated against because of their sex. The fact that "*they claimed they did not know that a woman could achieve something like that*" unequivocally explicates that women were seen as biologically ill-equipped to perform this kind of intellectually demanding work, such as academic research. This example reiterates explanatorily that women were not emancipated from hierarchical gender orders.

4.1.3 "The First Priority is Work Now!" – Unemployed Women

> The transferal of the socialist planned economy to the market economy structures struck working women particularly hard. They were frequently dismissed first, and their prospects

[265] Cf. In dem Institut, ich glaube, da waren die Unterschied zwischen den Genossen, den Parteigenossen und den Parteilosen, das war im Grund genommen die tangierende Schnittstelle. Es war weniger der Unterschied zwischen Männern und Frauen als dieser Status. Und wenn man als Nicht-Genossen etwas gleiche, eine gleichartige Funktion ausfüllen wollte, dann musste man schon nachweislich besser sein.
[266] Cf. Das war ein gravierender entscheidender Vorteil.
[267] Cf. Das ging schon mit der Habilitation los, ein anderer Kollege, der in/an der Partei war, einfach die Ergebnisse, die sie mit Doktoranden und Diplomanden erziehet hatte in seiner Arbeit genommen hatte, ohne das er dort reingeschrieben hat, dass dies die Arbeiten waren, die von ihr betreut waren, hat sie sich dann beschwert, sie hatten damals noch nicht gewusst, dass eine Frau auch leisten konnte, an wem sie sich wendetet und wie sie sich beschweren muss und dann musste er zwar nachträglich, das dort einbringen, aber wenn das schon alles unterwegs war, das war es im Prinzip sinnlos.

> of finding a new job were considerably worse than those of their male competitors till this day.[268] (Helwig 1993: 9)

In the book *Frauen in Deutschland 1945~1992* she co-edited with Hildegard Maria Nickel, Gisela Helwig addresses the phenomena of a grave gender-specific conflict resulting from the collapse of the *SED* regime. According to Helwig, women made up 55% of all unemployed in March 1991, and until the beginning of 1993, female unemployment rose to about two-thirds. Some areas had an unemployment level of 70 percent and even more (ibid.). For women who lost their jobs, unemployment resulted in financial difficulty; however, as Helwig reminds us, emotional dismay, from which women suffered, cannot be passed by unremarked (ibid.). Notwithstanding all their burdens, most women in the former *DDR* considered work to be a firm component of their life. The loss of work and economic independence therefore connote a painfully diminishing sense of self-esteem (ibid.).

Some of my informants experienced unemployment after the Reunification of Germany. Although they are currently working, they usually went through hard times looking for jobs, as was the case of Frauke. Frauke was born and brought up in a Catholic Sorbian family in 1950, in Nucknitz, Upper Lusatia. She taught Sorbian and Russian at a Sorbian school in Losa near Hoyerswerda. After she got married, she moved to Dresden where she continued to work as a teacher instructing only Russian until 1986. She said it was impossible to teach Sorbian at school in Dresden. Then she went to work at a daycare school. Currently she works at a kindergarten near her home in Dresden.

As noted earlier, she worked at the daycare center until it was closed because of a lack of children. Frauke was the one who "*came there last and left as the first*" [269] (interview with Frauke, October 4, 2003, in Dresden). In between, Frauke helped out in one kindergarten on a temporary basis, but she had been officially employed since then. Nevertheless, Frauke asserts the following:

> *In Lusatia, I certainly would have much more work now because of the WITAJ-groups. […] They start to teach Sorbian or both languages in kindergartens there now, but I am here now and Lusatia is far away from here. If I were younger…[I could commute just like] my sister drives to Bischofswerda everyday. It is very expensive to take train, but if I were a little younger, I might also go to Lusatia. The headmistress spoke to me about the possibility of teaching Sorbian at the grammar school over there [in Bautzen], but until the beginning of this year, we were still a family of six(Frauke, her husband and their four children). If Sarah had not been born, then I would have perhaps taught once again, maybe ethics or something else, but I have not worked as a teacher for such a long time*.[270] (Ibid.)

[268] Cf. Die Überführung der sozialistischen Planwirtschaft in marktwirtschaftliche Strukturen traf weibliche Erwerbstätige besonders hart. Sie wurde häufig als erste entlassen, und ihre Aussichten auf eine neue Beschäftigung blieben bislang erheblich schlechter als die der männlichen Konkurrenten.
[269] Cf. Als Letzte gekommen, und dann bin ich als Erste wieder gegangen.
[270] Cf. In der Lausitz hätte ich jetzt bestimmte sehr viel Arbeit, gerade durch diese WITAJ-Gruppen [...], in Kindergarten geht das ja jetzt los, dass die dort mit der Sprache anfangen oder zweisprachig, aber nun bin ich halt mal hier und der Weg bis in die Lausitz [weit], wenn ich jetzt noch jünger gewesen wäre, meine Schwester fährt ja auch jeden Tag bis Bischofswerda. Es ist zwar Wahnsinn teuer mit dem Zug [...]. Wenn ich ein bisschen jünger wäre, würde ich vielleicht auch sogar. Die Frau Leiterin hat mich auch

Reading Frauke's thoughts concerning her career, I found that the word "if" pervades: "if I had worked in Lusatia…", "if I were younger…", "if my daughter had not been born…". This "if" implies a feeling of wanting to work as a teacher like she did before. It would be even better if she could teach the Sorbian language as she taught in the past. The headmistress of the Sorbian grammar school in Bautzen offered Frauke a job to teach Sorbian there, but she cannot take this offer because of her family. She has four children (three sons and one daughter Sarah), and the youngest, Sarah, was born in 1993. The birth of Sarah seems to fall out of chime with the larger social context, as Frauke said, "*before the Wende*[271]*, children were actually the focus of attention, and now work is the key element; if you have work, then everything is different*"[272](ibid.).

The case of Frauke again arouses women's difficulty reconciling work and family. During our talk, Frauke repeated the significance of what work meant to her: "*the most important thing is work*" or "*the main thing is work now*". However, Frauke also feels sorry for Sarah as she really has less time for her because "*now you have to do everything, so that you are good at your job and so that you keep it*"[273](ibid.). Frauke knows she needs to spend more time with Sarah, for instance, in their spare time, but for Frauke, "*it costs much strength*"[274] (ibid.).

For Frauke, work is greatly valued in her life. This can be analyzed in two aspects. First, on the personal level, seen from the point of "the identity of work" (Østreng 2000: 6), "work, as a fundamental human category, is represented not only as a livelihood, but also a stable, consistent source of meaning in people's lives, and it is also regarded as the key to human self-articulisation and self-fulfilment" (ibid.). When work is discontinued, "people lose an inner back bone of life that originated in the industrial epoch" (Beck 1992: 140). Secondly, the former *DDR* was characterized as a "*Arbeitsgesellschaft*" and "*arbeiterliche Gesellschaft*" (Engler 2002) where work was seen as the "nucleus of socialization" generating a high employment rate, the ideological enhancement of work and the state-run concern-centered social policy[275] (Kohli 1994: 38ff., see also Ratajzack 2004: 212). Work thus played an outstanding role not only in the definition of the cultural construction and value fabric (see Becker & Merkel 2000: 9f.) but also in the integration of the "socialist people" economically, socially, politically and culturally (see Löden 2003: 5). Against this background, Frauke thus accords work much value.

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schon mal angesprochen, als Sorbischlehrer dort am Gymnasium [in Bautzen], aber weil wir bis Anfang des Jahres, waren wir noch ein Sechs-Familien-Haushalt, und wenn Sarah nicht geboren, dann hätte ich vielleicht auch noch mal, vielleicht hätte ich jetzt noch mal Ethik oder irgendwas gemacht noch auf Lehrer, aber als Lehrer bin ich jetzt auch viel zu lange raus.

[271] The German word "*Wende*" translates as "turn" and "change". This term means the collapse of *SED* regime and the fall of *DDR* in 1989 and 1990.

[272] Cf. Vor der Wende, dort waren die Kinder eigentlich der Mittelpunkt, und jetzt ist die Arbeit der Dreh- und Angelpunkt; wenn man Arbeit hat, dann läuft auch alles anders.

[273] Cf. Jetzt muss man alles tun, damit man in Beruf gut ist und damit man den erhält.

[274] Cf. Es kostet viel Kraft.

[275] As Sönke Löden (2003) puts it, the *Volkseigener Betrieb* (*VEB*, Publicly Owned Company) was the center of social life in the *DDR*.

4.1.4 Unequal Pay for Equal Work

Unequal pay for equal work has been one of the points at issue in terms of gender relations for some time now. In West Germany, the *Bundesarbeitsgericht* (Federal Labor Court) declared that the unequal pay of female and male work was against the constitution in 1955 (Braun 2005: 142). However, in the present, such remunerative discrimination against women still exists. In the following, one of my informants, Vera, who calls herself a feminist, tells us of her own experiences as an explanatory example of the inequality not only between the sexes, but also between ethnic groups.

> *It is true that in many Sorbian spheres, the payment of the employees is less than Germans of equal status. This is a fact. Of course, people have to do this carefully, but it something experienced. I used to work for a newspaper, Sorbian weekly newspaper […]. Let us take a comparable German weekly newspaper. For the payment that an editor at this Sorbian weekly newspaper earns, a German would not touch his pen [he would not do it], for example. That is a bit exaggerated, but it is an example. If the person is a women, for instance, who is a single mother, like me, and has to work, she is doubly and triply discriminated in comparison with a Sorbian man because he is the bread-winner, and gets more pay anyway because he is a man. It does not matter whether he is Sorb or German. He earns more because he is a man. The third level is the comparison with a German woman.* [276] (Interview with Vera, August 23, 2002, in Cottbus)

Based on her experience as an editor for a weekly newspaper in the Lower Sorbian language, Vera first sharpens our awareness of the case of unequal pay in the Sorbian areas in comparison with the German ones. Furthermore, if this involves the sexes of the employees, then such inequality intensifies. In Vera's case, it even gravitates toward an arduous perplexity because she is a single mother. Vera's son was born in 1989, just in time for the Reunification, and was born handicapped. The situation with which Vera is confronted – as a single mother with a disabled child during Reunification – therefore becomes aggravated. For a single mother in eastern Germany, there is no dividing line distinguishing her three-fold accountability: child-caring and education, bread-winning, and housework (Steenbergen 1994: 240). Single mothers have been loaded with multi-layered burdens since Reunification: an exhausting physical load, tight distribution of time, financial worries, housing worries, work, and taking care of children (Liebecke 1994: 227).

Vera is an editor by occupation and works six hours a day. Additionally, she is also a freelance journalist and works for radio programs and the press and writes reviews for

[276] Cf. Es ist einfach wahr, dass in vielen sorbischen Bereichen, die Bezahlung der Angestellten weniger ist als bei einem gleichrangigen Deutschen. Das ist Fakt. Da muss man natürlich vorsichtig mit operieren, aber das ist einfach eine Erfahrung. Ich habe auch schon bei einer Zeitung gearbeitet, die sorbische Wochenzeitung. [...] Nehmen wir mal doch eine vergleichbare deutsche Wochenzeitung. Für das Gehalt, was ein Redakteur bei dieser sorbischen Wochenzeitung verdient, würde ein Deutscher nicht den Bleistift anfassen, zum Beispiel. Ich übertreibe mal, aber zum Beispiel. So, wenn das dann noch eine Frau ist, die zum Beispiel alleinerziehend ist, wie ich, und arbeiten muss, ist sie doppelt und dreifach benachteiligt gegenüber dem sorbischen Mann, weil er ja der Verdiener ist und sowieso mehr kriegt, weil er ein Mann ist, ob Sorbe oder Deutscher, ist egal, der kriegt mehr, weil er Mann ist. Die dritte Stufe ist im Vergleich zu der deutschen Frau.

education and literature. Moreover, she teaches Sorbian at the adult education center. As a single parent, Vera has to earn money for her son and herself, and she therefore has multiple jobs as noted above. On the one hand, she must work fewer jobs because she has to spend more time taking care of her disabled son; on the other hand, as a single mother with a disabled child, Vera must fight for everything by herself. For instance, she is responsible for finding out if there is support for single parents and for handicapped children if she has a right to aid for herself and her son Tobias. Vera emphasizes that she must deal with everything on her own and this is different from the period of the former *DDR*.[277] As stated earlier, the *DDR* was an "*Arbeitsgesellschaft*", and waged employment played a tremendous role. While the *DDR* existed, single mothers had work. Work exerted its influence over personal life to the last degree because concerns and institutions took over the familial responsibilities in (Steenbergen 1994: 241). In addition, people usually made friends with their colleagues because they rarely changed workplaces. Therefore, colleagues were also friends for many years. Among them, a social network of reciprocal help formed. In this sense, female colleagues were important people for single mothers (ibid.). However, the Reunification of Germany brought social transformation in its wake. The fields of work, family and social relations consequently changed. Against this background, it is significantly hard for single mothers to reconcile work with caring for children; especially because they are confronted with increasing competition at work places (1994: 243). In this regard, Vera cited an example for me: A single mother who works eight hours each work day. Her male boss expects her to work two more hours, but she cannot meet her boss's expectation because she must pick up her child before the kindergarten closes. Nevertheless, this single mother cannot say this to her boss. Generally speaking, her male boss is not interested in such excuses. For him, he could just as well hire another woman. It would be even better if he were to hire a man (interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus).

According to Vera, inequality in the realm of work is not only illustrated in the gender-specific competition as noted above, but it is also demonstrated in the competition between ethnic groups. Suppose this person is a Sorbian woman like Vera who writes a theater play in the Sorbian language:

> *Good, maybe, it has to be staged. It should be. It would be wonderful. But even if it were staged, what kind of audience would I have? I could also write it in German. If it is good, I then also think that a Sorbian theater play is nevertheless good, but let us assume that it [a Sorbian theater play] would be considered as good as a German one and it would be put on. This is quite another public sphere for this real Sorbian woman, or man as well. It is the same. But there are fewer women who write because they don't have time until much later to write a Sorbian theater play, because they have a family. And a man has his wife and he has time and can write 20 years earlier. This is true. It is true, isn't it? So, these three levels, this comparison, it is true, in any case. It is true for every field, so spontaneously I say it.* [278] (Ibid.)

[277] Vera declares that she only theoretically knows the difference because she has been a single mother since 1989.

[278] Cf. Ich habe jetzt zusammen mit der Kollegin das Theaterstück geschrieben; gut, mag sein, es muss ja auch ausgeführt werden, es sollte, es wäre schön. Aber selbst wenn es aufgeführt würde, was habe ich

First, Vera specifies that fewer audiences appreciate theater plays staged in Sorbian, although they are as good as those in the German language. Second, as a Sorbian woman playwright, there is a tremendous gap between her and male Sorbian playwrights because women cannot free themselves from the burden of family. This inequality is produced through the naturalization of the gender difference. Simultaneously, ethnic difference is also involved. At the interconnections of gender and ethnicity as shown in the above example of play writing, women of ethnic minority are located in disfavored positions.

4.2 Children's Education

Children's education is one aspect of everyday life, but it is very important to note that I do not mean to presume a form of gendered essentialism by linking children's education with women and mothers. That is also to say, it is not my intention to generate a taken-for-granted motherhood that the women I interviewed are assumed to be embodied in. What I am trying to explore is how those women under study here construct their identities by delving into their versions of children's education. For instance, how does a mother perceive the decision of her daughter to not speak Sorbian? Why do some mothers take the common value of human beings as a central concept in rearing their young? Why does a mother place emphasis on the "we-feeling"? Why does a German-speaking mother send her son to learn the Sorbian language? These questions will help us to approach my informants' life experiences and sense of belonging.

4.2.1 Value Orientation for Children

4.2.1.1 A Cosmopolitan Version

"*We have not influenced our child nationally in any way, [such as] 'you are Sorb, you have to speak Sorbian, you have to do it*'"[279] (interview with Elenore, September 25, 2003, in Bautzen) said Elenore (born in 1951). She told me that she and her husband do not put nationalist ideas into their agenda of education. Elenore's daughter, Stephanie, learned the Sorbian language at school, but "*she has rejected [the Sorbian language] inwardly very much. She did not want to get hurt*"[280] (ibid.). According to Elenore, the reasons why Stephanie feels uncomfortable speaking Sorbian are as follows: First, Elenore's parents-in-law have influenced her as she spent much time with them in

dann da für ein Publikum? So, ich könnte das doch auch in Deutsch schreiben. Wenn es gut ist, ich denke dann auch, dass Sorbisch trotzdem gut ist, aber nehmen wir mal an, es würde im Deutschen als genauso gut betrachtet werden, und es würde aufgeführt werden. Das ist doch eine ganz andere Öffentlichkeit für diese konkrete sorbische Frau, auch Mann, in dem Sinne ist das gleich. Aber als Frau noch weniger, weil sie viel später dazu kommt, an sorbisches Theaterstück zu schreiben, weil sie ihre Familie, und der Mann hat seine Frau und er hat Zeit und kann das 20 Jahre früher schreiben. Das ist die Wahrheit. Das ist einfach wahr, nicht? So, in dem Sinne, diese dreifach, diese Steigerung, die kommt auf jeden Fall, die stimmt auf jeden Bereich, so spontan sage ich mal das.

[279] Cf. Wir haben nicht national, unser Kind irgendwie geprägt, "du bist Sorb, du muss Sorbisch sprechen, du muss das".

[280] Cf. Sie hat innerlich sehr abgelehnt. Also, sie wollte sich nicht verletzbar machen.

Wittichenau, near Hoyerswerda. Wittichenau is a town where the majority of dwellers are in business and trade. They have a negative attitude toward the Sorbs, and say, for example, "*they are Wendish*" in a derogatory tone. National Socialism was an awkward time for the Sorbs during which their lives were disrupted and language banned. Consequently, in Elenore's family-in-law, an atmosphere of veiling their Sorbian-ness pervades and persists. This is significantly evident in the demand on children, "*You cannot speak Sorbian. You speak German,*" because Elenore's mother-in-law wants to protect her children. In this sense, "not speaking Sorbian" lowers barriers of a perceived difference as Sorb. Under the influence of Elenore's parents-in-law, Stephanie now has the same attitude. Second, Stephanie says that she prefers speaking German and has no affinity for the Sorbian language, because for her the whole surroundings are German. Additionally, teachers at school pay strict, particular attention to the Sorbian language. She therefore takes an anti attitude toward it.

The above two reasons account for Stephanie's choice to not speak Sorbian. Elenore and her husband accept and respect their daughter's decision. This also reveals how Elenore and her family deal with their Sorbian-ness: "*We were never demonstratively in favor of something*"[281] (ibid.). Such a point of view implies Elenore's version of value orientation for bringing up her children:

> *You accept everything, you reject nothing, you approach things you do not know, you draw nearer to people you do not know. It has been very important. There are always many people at my house. They come from totally different countries, speak totally differently languages, I have friends in Austria, in China, in France, in Finland. It is really an open house. I have never said something demonstratively like, "we are Sorbs and you are not at all". We were just open-minded. My husband works with an international group in Munich. He is a brewer. It is very international at his working place. There are Turks and other people of different nationalities. We think internationally. I always say, I am a cosmopolitan or something like that, and I also want to be seen as a cosmopolitan.*[282] (Ibid.)

Elenore's view on her daughter's choice of language implies that, first, she repudiates the conventional discourse on the "Sorbian mother" which "naturalizes" women as mothers of the Sorbian people by holding women responsible for bestowing the Sorbian language on their children. Second, Elenore rejects the common view in the Sorbian cultural discourse that the element of language is an indispensable and fundamental essence of Sorbian ethnic identity. Rather, Elenore's attitude toward her child is evocative of her own map of identity: Being a Sorb does not imply such an irreducible essence that non-Sorbs (e.g. Germans, French, etc.) must be considered

[281] Cf. Wir waren nie demonstrative irgendwas.

[282] Cf. dass man alles annimmt, dass man nichts ablehnt, dass man sich nähert, auch Sachen, die man nicht kennt, auch Menschen, die man nicht kennt. Das ist ganz wichtig gewesen. Bei mir, eigentlich sind viele Leute, auch ein- und ausgegangen immer bei mir zu Hause, aus ganz verschiedenen Ländern, mit ganz verschiedenen Sprachen. Meine Freunde in Österreich, in China, in Frankreich, in Finnland, und so. Das war immer eigentlich ein offenes Haus. Aber ich habe nie irgendwie etwas demonstrative gesagt, „wir sind Sorben und ihr gar nicht". Wir waren einfach offen. Mein Mann hat auch eine internationale Gruppe, er arbeitet in München, der ist Brauer, und die sind total international, sind türkische Leute und so. Also wir denken international. Ich sage immer, ich bin Kosmopolit oder so irgendetwas und so möchte ich mich auch verstanden wissen.

diametrically opposed to the Sorbs. Furthermore, she does not set up Sorbian-ness as an overarching rubric; rather, she defines herself as a cosmopolitan person who is open-minded toward people of different nationalities and languages. That is to say, Elenore's entering other cultures displays her cosmopolitan position: "A willingness to engage with the Other, an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences" (Hannerz 1992: 252). Elenore crafts her identity as cosmopolitan in the process of her biographical globalization as exemplified by her circle of friends. German sociologist Ulrich Beck also clarifies the concept of "globalization of biography" in *Was is Globalizierung?* (What is Globalization?) from 1998 in the following:

> The differences of the world not only take place somewhere out there, but rather in the center of one's own life, in multi-cultural marriages, families, at work, in one's circle of friends, at school, in the movie theater, while shopping at the cheese counter, listening to music, having supper, making love, and so forth. [283] (Beck 1998: 129)

Both Elenore and her husband live a life of poly-locations (*ortspolygam*, *Mehrörtigkeit*) as illustrated in their circle of friends and workplace. This poly-location does not necessarily mean different geographical places, which is one of its various meanings, but it also indicates "between cultures" (1998: 131), as is the case with Elenore who lives a way of life between Sorbian, German, French, Finnish, Chinese, Austria cultures, and more. In this sense, the boundaries between nations, cultures, skin colors, and religions cross over each other. Differences between the above-mentioned seeming demarcations are included in Elenore's life because she is curious about something new in order to decipher her view of world.[284] This constitutes her globalized life.

4.2.1.2 A Multiplicity of Choices in Life

Johanna, a mother of three, advances the elementary values of equality, solidarity, and respect for the freedom of others, respect for the dignity of others, solidarity in the family, as her notion of children's education (interview with Johanna, September 22, 2003, in Bautzen). An elementary value connotes that *"the value, which we pass on, applies to the Germans as well*"[285] (ibid.). Similarly, it makes no difference whether you are German or Sorb, basic values apply for every human being. Lydia (born in 1954) designates respect for grandparents as one of the substantial aspects that she thinks is important for her three children to learn. In Lydia's view, "*respect for grandparents is also respect for tradition in a way*"[286] (interview with Lydia, October 5, 2003, in Bautzen). Tradition here means Sorbian and Polish because Lydia's father-in-law was a Sorb and her mother-in-law comes from Poland. To Lydia's belief, holding

[283] Cf. Die Gegensätze der Welt finden nicht nur dort draußen, sondern im Zentrum des eigenes Lebens, in multikulturellen Ehen und Familien, im Betrieb, im Freundeskreis, in der Schule, im Kino, beim Einkaufen an der Käsetheke, Musikhören, Abendbrotessen, Liebemachen usw. statt.
[284] Here I paraphrase Beck's viewpoint on "*Mehrörtigkeit*": people can be or become curious about something new to decipher their (view of) world. (Cf. etwas Neues, auf das man neu-gierig sein oder werden kann, um dessen Welt(-Sicht) zu entschlüsseln.) (Beck 1998: 134).
[285] Cf. die Werte, die wir vermittelt haben, die gelten für Deutsche gleichermaßen.
[286] Cf. Die Achtung vor den Großeltern, ist auch eine Achtung vor der Tradition irgendwo.

traditions in high esteem enriches her children's lives because she sees multi-cultures (Sorbian, German and Polish) in her family as enrichment. Furthermore, Lydia's three sons were conscientious objectors, so they carried out community services as an alternative to military service. Lydia recognizes this as an embodiment of a general human value – the respect for other people. In addition to the concepts of value orientation as noted above, other informants also mentioned the following notions, which they accord precedence to impart to their youngsters: honesty, reliability, environmental consciousness, an awareness of nature, mental and spiritual life, art and music education, freedom, openness, and open-mindedness.

Seen from the perspective of Johanna, Lydia and other informants, who as mothers consider it vital for their offspring to learn basic universal values, respect for others, freedom and environmental consciousness have high priority. Nevertheless, these things do not make up parts of their particular types of belonging, meaning being Sorbian or German recede into the background. Instead, they are constructed in the process of the pluralization of contexts of social life. Taken together, this forms the multiplicity of choices that my informants make for their lives. It simultaneously connotes how they work out their self-identity by posing the following questions: "What do I do? How do I act? Who should I be?" (Giddens 1991: 70). In Giddens' account, these three questions are "focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity – and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behavior" (ibid.). Taking it a step further, self-identity is a "reflexively organized endeavor" (1991: 5) and "the reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choices as filtered through abstract systems" (ibid.). The value orientation as noted previously, such as freedom, equality, pacifism, being in tune with nature, and mental and spiritual life, can be decoded as an expression of the choices of their lifestyles. As Giddens puts it:

> […] in modern social life, the notion of lifestyle takes on a particular significance. The more tradition it loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstitutes in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and the global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options. (Ibid.)

4.2.1.3 The "We-Feeling" and Solidarity

In Angela's conception of value orientation for her children (two daughters and one son), freedom, openness, and cultural and musical education take on special significance (interview with Angela, September 24, 2003, in Bautzen). Furthermore, she puts much value on teaching her children the Sorbian language. "*Language plays an important role, maintaining the language, passing it on*"[287] (ibid.). In addition to safeguarding and developing the Sorbian language, it is vital for her youngsters to acquire a "we-feeling" (*Wir-Gefühl*) and a "feeling of solidarity" (*Solidaritätsgefühl*). As noted at the end of the previous chapter (see Chapter 3.2.5), I have already sketched out that Angela identifies herself with the Sorbian collectivity by showing her sense of

[287] Cf. Das spielt schon eine Rolle, also die Sprache erst mal, die Sprache behalten, die Sprache weitergeben.

responsibility for the Sorbs and "doing something for the Sorbs". This is a manifestation of her "we-feeling" and solidarity. According to Angela, growing up in big family on the countryside and the influence during her school time constitute the core of her sense of collectivity:

> *I grew up on the farm and there was much work to be divided. I was the eldest sister, the eldest child, then there was my sister, who is one year younger than me, then my brother and my sister, and then my two sisters […]. There was much work to be done, and we, as children, of course had to help much. As young children, we had responsibility which we had to carry out, whether it was responsibility for the whole household because my mother was in the fields. This [experience] influenced me.*[288] (Ibid.)

Growing up in a family of six children in a rural region, Angela, as the eldest child in her family, had to help with housework and work with her younger sisters and brother, so they could carry out their domestic tasks. Angela's mother worked in the fields so the children were therefore held accountable for the housework. Family, as the prototype of collectivity, initiated Angela's sense of "we" as the whole.

Furthermore, as Angela asserts, teachers and school also made her aware of being a member of a collectivity. She remembers a Sorbian and a music teacher in particular:

> *She built up a choir with us when we were probably in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades, about from 12 to 14 years old. I was surely influenced by this music teacher. And then during the period of the Unified Comprehensive School, i.e. in the last four years of secondary school, I was certainly influenced by our class teacher who taught Sorbian*.[289] (Ibid.)

In secondary school, Angela was taught to take a more active role:

> *The chaplain from the church taught us and influenced me for sure. At that time, at the age of 14, we were away from home and lived in the dormitory. We had a community of pupils in the dormitory. As I said, all of us were in the same grade. We were together in one group. As a group, all of us thought we had to do something [for the Sorbs]. It was a forming moment.*[290] *(Ibid.)*

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[288] Cf. Ich bin groß geworden in der Landwirtschaft, und da war sehr viel zu arbeiten, und die Arbeit musste aufgeteilt werden, und dann war's so, ich bin die älteste Schwester, ich bin das älteste Kind, und meine Schwester, ist ein Jahr jünger, und dann sind zwei Geschwister, mein Bruder und meine Schwester, die mit etwas Abstand dann gekommen sind, dann kommen noch zwei Schwestern [...]. Es war sehr viele Arbeit gewesen, und wir mussten, als Kind, natürlich auch sehr viel mithelfen, und es musste ganz einfach, wir haben auch sehr zeitig wirklich Verantwortung bekommen, das mussten wir erfüllen, ob das jetzt Verantwortung für den gesamten Haushalt war, weil die Mutter war ja auf dem Feld gewesen, das hat mich geprägt.

[289] Cf. Von einer Lehrerin, die war bei uns Musiklehrerin gewesen, in der so und sie hat den Chor bei uns aufgebaut, da waren wie noch so in der so 5. 6. 7. Klasse wahrscheinlich, also ungefähr von 12 bis 14 Jahren bin ich bestimmt von dieser Musiklehrerin geprägt geworden; und dann in der Zeit, in der Oberschulzeit, also d.h. in den letzten vier Jahren bis zum Abitur, dort bin ich garantiert con unserem Klasseleiter geprägt worden, der war Sorbisch Lehrer gewesen.

[290] Cf. Etwas zu tun, aktiv zu sein als Jugendlicher. Und geprägt hat mich garantiert auch der Kaplan, von der Kirche aus der, der uns dort unterrichtet hat, und dann war es so gewesen, wir sind damals mit 14 Jahren, sind wir von zu Hause weg, sind ins Internat, und auf die Gemeinschaft der Schüler untereinander im Internet, ja, wie gesagt, wir waren alles eine Klasse gewesen und wir waren so eine Gruppe

Angela's sense of collectivity burgeoned in her family life since childhood. Teachers, chaplain, classmates as well as dormitory mates all helped her develop her personal identification with the Sorbian collectivity. In this process, school education, which included the Sorbian language and music education (choir), religion cohere Angela and her classmates as a unity. As to language and religion, I have already explored how they are constructed as a basis for collective Sorbian identity in the previous chapters (see Chapters 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4). It is important to note that music and choir singing play a part in the cohesion of Sorbs as a collectivity. The nationalist connotation that singing carries[291] can be traced back to the first Sorbian song festival in Lusatia organized by Korla August Kocor (1822~1904), held on October 17, 1845, in Bautzen. This festival inaugurated the beginning of the development of Sorbian national music culture. It also displayed popular and striking events in Sorbian cultural life (Kobjela 1993: 209). At the same time, this festival was considered to be "the inchoation of modern Sorbian bourgeois Sorbian music culture, in which from now on choral concert became the main arrangement"[292] (Raupp 1978: 63, quoted in Statelova 2003: 155). Attending choir singing can be decoded as an expression of Sorbian identity, particularly when "choir is regarded as the pillar of Sorbian music culture, furthermore, language is common in vocal music" (Statelova interviews with Detlef Kobjela, 2003: 160). Choir singing is seen as the promotion and natural revitalization of the Sorbian language (ibid.).[293] Against this background, choir formation is seen as one of the cohesive elements for the construction of an imagined Sorbian community, thus creating the boundaries and foundation for solidarity and unity. This involves a process in which collective identity emerges. However, "collective identity is a question of identification on the part of the involved individuals"[294] (Straub 1998: 102, referring to Assman 1992: 132). Collectivity is not generated as a natural given, rather is "only at the same rate as certain individuals declare themselves to it. Collective identity is only as strong or as weak as it is alive in group members' thinking and doing and is able to motivate their thoughts and actions"[295] (ibid.).

As can be seen in the case of Angela, her sense of attachment to the Sorbian collectivity motivates her to devote herself to Sorbian affairs by teaching at a Sorbian grammar school. Furthermore, she is engaged in educating youth in her spare time, for instance, she is writing a book concerning the following:

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zusammen, wie wir, wo wir meinten, wir müssen was machen für, so, das war auch so ein Prägungsmoment gewesen.

[291] The emergence and development of bourgeois choir singing in the period of Sorbian "national rebirth" is not only a specific Sorbian or Slavic phenomenon, but is rather an expression of increasing bourgeois self-consciousness in many European countries at that time (Kunze 1995: 105). For instance, Germans were also included in such nationalist undertakings expressed in the context of the connection between "national movement – Enlightenment movement – choir movement". (Statelova 2003: 155).

[292] Cf. Beginn des neuzeitlichen bürgerlichen sorbischen Musiklebens, in dem von nun an Chorkonzerte zur tragenden Einrichtung wurden.

[293] This especially applies to the regions such as Middle and Lower Lusatia where Sorbian/Wendish is not a colloquial language (Detlef Kobjela interviewed by Statelova, 2003: 160).

[294] Cf. Kollektive Identität ist eine Frage der Identifikation seitens der beteiligten Individuen.

[295] Cf. Es gibt sie nicht ›an sich‹, sondern immer nur in dem Maße, wie sich bestimmte Individuen zu ihr bekennen, Sie ist so stark oder so schwach, wie sie im Denken und Handeln der Gruppenmitglieder lebendig ist und deren Denken und Handeln zu motivieren vermag.

> *A historical comparison between German and Sorbian history that you can put in the hands of children and pupils. The book is a sort of synopsis, or an overview. As to selecting materials, it is more. We do not have a comparison between German and Sorbian history. […] I really enjoy doing this. It is a pleasure*.[296] (Ibid.)

As observed in Angela's notion of raising children, the "we-feeling" and solidarity are very important. This educational version as such also hints at Angela's sense of responsibility for her ethnic peers, more significantly, for the development of Sorbian culture. It can be stated that a sense of collectivity stands in the center of Angela's account. Angela herself explains that this has to do with her family background and education because Sorbian-ness is a predominant factor there. However, in a way, life in the socialist *Kollektiv* (collective, team, or group) in East Germany can also be seen as playing a part in Angela's and other informants' ideas about raising children. For instance, it is important to Lydia to let her children learn "*team spirit, which is always important to us, the ability to communicate and discuss, which I greatly value*"[297] (interview with Lydia, October 5, 2003, in Bautzen). In most fields of social life, including social relations, attitudes, interaction and communication in East Germany, the emphasis on mutual assistance, solidarity and egalitarianism embodied in the spirit of the *Kollektiv* had a strong influence on East Germans' everyday lives (see Roth & Roth 1999: 167). As German ethnologists Franziska Becker and Ina Merkel, who currently teach at the University of Marburg, point out in their book (co-edited together with Simone Tippach-Schneider) *Das Kollektiv bin ich. Utopie und Alltag in der DDR* (I am the Collective. Utopia and Everyday Life in the *DDR*) (2000), the conception of the self as embodying the *Arbeitsgesellschaft* and *arbeiterliche Gesellschaft*[298] as well as the ideas of mutuality and solidarity play a decisive role in the cultural norm and value structure of *DDR* society (2000: 9f.). As Becker and Merkel further note, work and the *Kollektiv* are two central themes in everyday life in socialist societies, which are based on the organization of property (2000: 10). The question therefore concerns which cultural meaning the establishment of *Volkseigentum* (nationally owned property/the people's property) had in the everyday life of individuals and how it affected their ideas of justice, their views of the state and where they work, and their attitudes toward land (*Boden*) etc. (ibid.). Both writers argue that it was a utopian idea of the state to make work a necessity in people's lives. In this sense, work was loaded with considerable significance and developed as a site of education. In consciously returning to plebian traditions, values and working culture, a normative concept of work became increasingly important (ibid.). Work was also considered to be the key approach in socialist ideology to egalitarianism and to working together to build socialism in a concerted way. Moreover, this voluntary association among all society members constituted a utopian background for thoughts on the *Kollektiv* (ibid.). This

[296] Cf. [...]einen geschichtlichen Vergleich zwischen der deutschen und der sorbischen Geschichte, dass was man den Kindern, den Schülern in die Hand bringt, also so eine Art Synoptikum, sagt man eigentlich so dazu, also einen Übersicht. Beim Heraussuchen der Materialien, das ist eben mehr, ich meinte nur, die Sorben in Deutschland und die deutsche Geschichte gegenüberstellt, so haben wir nicht, [...] das macht mir selber viel Spaß, das mache ich gern.
[297] Cf. Teamgeist, was uns immer wichtig ist, die Fähigkeit zur Kommunikation und Argumentation, also das sind für mich ganz wichtig.
[298] See Chapter 4.1.3.

idea of the *Kollektiv – Vom Ich zum Wir* (the collective – me to we) was a propaganda slogan (ibid.). It had significant influence on East German life and contrasted sharply with the individualism and personal autonomy in West Germany and Western Europe (see Roth & Roth 1999: 167; Borneman 1992: 243).

4.2.2 A WITAJ Parent's Thoughts

Gabriella, who was born in 1969 in Bautzen, began to have a connection with the Sorbian culture when she married a Sorb (she is currently divorced) who also came from Bautzen. At that time, Gabriella and her ex-husband sent their son, Peter (currently 10 years old), to a WITAJ kindergarten for his pre-school education. During our talk, Gabriella repeated her contentedness and enthusiasm about Peter's perfect achievement in learning the Sorbian language in the WITAJ kindergarten. Although the colloquial language in the family is German, especially after Gabriella divorced her ex-husband, Peter has become the only Sorbian-speaker at home. Peter often speaks Sorbian to Gabriella, for instance, when they have meals, cook, set the table and when he reads stories in Sorbian to Gabriella before he goes to bed. He often says things such as "*Prošu pomhaj mi*" (please help me) in Sorbian. Gabriella barely understands what her son is saying to her, but she can detect what Peter is trying to tell her in terms of the context and tries to comprehend him.

In addition to Peter's occasionally speaking the Sorbian language, Gabriella is learning the Sorbian language and culture by participating in some activities together with her son, for example, the 1000th anniversary of the founding of Bautzen (2002), the Birds' Wedding (on January 25th) and St. Martin's Day (on November 11th). Furthermore, she helps Peter with his homework in Sorbian. Gabriella asks her son to translate homework from Sorbian into German orally for her. In plain terms, Gabriella told me that she actually cannot assist Peter much in principle. She can only compare his spelling and check it with dictionary. Nonetheless, she still tries hard to do it, because "*you yourself also feel a need to do it. I want to understand him, I want to be able to read and I want to speak with him that way [in the Sorbian language]* [299] (interview with Gabriella, September 26, 2003, in Bautzen). Through her son, Gabrielle not only learns the Sorbian language, albeit not to a great extent, she also appreciates how to understand being a polyglot from a different angle: it becomes normal. Both in kindergarten and at school, it is quite normal for children to speak with their teachers in Sorbian, while they talk with other schoolchildren in German. Bilingualism or being a polyglot is ordinary in Peter's eyes. Having Russian native speakers as classmates also motivates Peter to learn Russian because he would like to understand his classmates more. As Gabriella put it, "*what is for me still a phenomenon, is natural to him*"[300] (ibid.).

In addition to the positive attitude toward bilingualism and bi-cultures shown through Peter's attendance in the WITAJ kindergarten, there is one practical reason for why Gabriella is very satisfied with this project. In WITAJ classes, there are only 12 pupils, while in another classes, there are 29. For Gabriella, as a parent, it is very good

[299] Cf. Man selber das Bedürfnis auch hat, ich möchte ihn verstehen. Ich möchte es lesen können, und ich möchte mit ihm so sprechen wollen.
[300] Cf. Was für mich noch ein Phänomen ist, was aber für ihn selbstverständlich ist.

for her son to have better learning conditions, as teachers have much more time to take care of children. Despite these advantages, Gabriella's friends and acquaintances doubt her decision to let her son learn the Sorbian language. In Gabriella's words, they hold much prejudice against the Sorbs. For instance, they say, "*how can you let him learn Sorbian? English is important!*"[301] (ibid.). Such questions make Gabriella feel hurt, but Gabriella argues in favor of the benefits of learning the Sorbian language:

> *The whole market, the whole economy, the whole function is going eastwards, where Russian, Sorbian, Czech, and Polish are spoken. Why should he [Peter] have problem with it? If everything is moving there, he [Peter] can understand Czech if he speaks Sorbian. He can also understand and read some Polish. There are many advantages. As far as I am concerned, as to English, he will learn it at school.*[302] (Ibid.)

Gabriella's argument, that the acquisition of Sorbian is a useful resource for connecting with Eastern Europe and Russia, echoes one of the main advantages promoted in the official WITAJ brochures (Sorbische Schulverein 1998: 6; WITAJ-Sprachzentrum 2002: 9; see also Ratajczak 2004: 221f.). In this sense, Sorbian, which is a Slavonic language, serves a beneficial purpose for communicating with other Slavonic countries, especially in terms of economy and emerging in tandem with the eastward expansion of the European Union. This also implies that young people who speak Sorbian will have an occupational perspective in the future (Sorbische Schulverein 1998: 6; Ratajczak 2004: 222). Furthermore, speaking both German and Sorbian functions as a bridge between Western and Eastern Europe (WITAJ-Sprachzentrum 2002: 9). In comparison with the Sorbian language, English, although a dominant international language, can be acquired later at most every school. In other words, people have easier access to learning English, while Sorbian is only taught in Lusatia.

In spite of Gabriella's argument above, her friends obviously see things differently, as their reply implies a "profit" that the Sorbs gain because they say, "*The Sorbs, they have advantages. They get everything, and they have loads of money*"[303] (ibid.). This "loads of money" denotes financial aid from the government. The issue of money is a touchy subject for the Sorbs. As Heckmann pointed out, "the financial support of the Sorbs became the source of envy, resentment and prejudice against the Sorbs in the German majority population"[304] (Heckmann 1992: 28). The German-speaking media also contributed to this by posing the idea that it is has to be assumed that "Sorbian is only important to the Sorbs in order to get money"[305] (Toivanen 2001: 40f.). This situation with which Gabriella is confronted vividly reflects the financial dispute that the Sorbs have been long caught in (Chapter 2.4.2.1). For Gabriella, her son's learning

[301] Cf. „Wie kannst du denn dem Sorbisch lernen lassen, und Englisch ist doch wichtig!"
[302] Cf. Ganze Markt, die ganze Wirtschaft, die ganze Funktion, geht alles nach Osten, sprich Russisch, Sorbisch, Tschechisch, Polisch, ich sage warum soll er denn für ein Problem haben? Wenn das sich, alles rüber drückt, er versteht wenn er Sorbisch spricht, die tschechische Sprache, er kann Polisch etwas verstehen, lesen, und und und, das sind viele Vorteile. Ich meine, das Englische, das wird er in der Schule lernen.
[303] Cf. Die Sorben und die haben Vorteile, die kriegen alles, und die haben ein Haufen Geld.
[304] Cf. die finanziellen Zuwendungen an die Gruppe wurden zu einer Quelle der Missgunst und des Vorurteils gegen die Gruppe in der deutschen Mehrheitsbevölkerung.
[305] Cf. das Sorbische sei für die Sorben nur wichtig, um Gelder zu bekommen.

Sorbian is completely irrelevant to this alleged "profitability":

> *Peter really learns the Sorbian language playfully, without being pressed, without being put under pressure, without making sacrifices, without having stress because he had to learn it or anything else. He has learned it very well and playfully*.[306] (Ibid.)

4.3 Leisure Activities

"If the actual activities associated with an occupation constitute work, then how do we define leisure? Are work and leisure always distinguishable from one another?" (Auster 1996: 3). The above two questions posed by American sociologist Carol J. Auster motivate us to ponder the relationship between work and leisure. For Auster, "work and leisure may appear to be products of the choices an individual makes, changes and makes again throughout life" (ibid.). This is to say that the choice of work purports the choice of leisure; it is a process that is continuously in progress. However, as the author further puts it, "the type of work you do along with your age, social class, and a variety of other important sociological variables can have a strong influence on the relationship between work and leisure and the choice of leisure activities" (ibid.). Auster places emphasis on the relationship between work and leisure, while German-speaking sociologist Karin Hlavin-Schulze throws light on the biographical influence on leisure by stating that "individual leisure activities are always developed before entering into work and become habits. […] Leisure activities are affected by 'biographical determinants' (psychosomatic, familiar-social disposition)[307] (Hlavin-Schulze 1998: 128).

Auster and Hlavin-Schulze provide us with the view that leisure cannot be analyzed without taking work into consideration; moreover, age, social, income, gender (Auster 1996: 6), psychosomatic and familiar-social elements (Hlavin-Schulze 1998: 128) are factors that influence individuals' choice of leisure activities. In addition to the above variables, however, in my study I have to add that ethnic and cultural must also be given consideration in delving into how those people I am studying define leisure, in other words into what they do in their leisure time, and why.

At this point, I will start with the definitions of leisure proposed by some of women studied.

4.3.1 Definition: The Relationship between Work and Leisure

Ina, an artist and employee at a call center, at first described work to me as something closely associated with finances, as exemplified by her work at a call center. Simply put, work is related to a paid job with which she earns money. However, for Ina, art is not solely categorized as work. Rather, the overlapping of work and leisure intermeshes

[306] Cf. Mein Kind hat wirklich im Spielen, ohne dass, er gedrängt wurde, ohne dass er bedrängt wurde, ohne dass er geopfert wurde, oder was auch immer. Er hat immer im Spielen diese Sorbische Sprache erlernt, ohne dass er Stress dabei hatte, lernen musste, oder sonst irgendwas nichts, ganz toll, fließend, im Spiel, hat er das gelernt.

[307] Cf. Individuelle Freizeitverhaltensweisen werden bereits vor Eintritt in die Arbeitswelt entwickelt und zur Gewohnheit [...] Das ›biographisch Vorgegebene‹ (psychosomatische, familiär-soziale Disposition) stellt die bestimmende Einflussgröße für das Freizeitverhalten dar.

with art. For example, as Ina said:

> *I go to a museum to see an exhibition in order to be up-to-date [with the latest development/trend in art]. This absolutely belongs to my occupation. I have to do it. Therefore, I could also call going to museum work, but it is also leisure time because, although it belongs to my occupation, it is fun and makes me happy. It is relaxing, and I meet people and so on. They [work and leisure time] already often merge with each other*.[308] (Interview with Ina, November 11, 2003, in Berlin)

Heike (born in 1959), who is also an artist by occupation as well, does not abstract work from leisure. She states quite the opposite:

> *When I travel or am on the road, I always have a piece of paper and a pen with me. When I read a book, it also has an influence on my painting. For me, there is no distinction between work and spare time. I'm always working, actually*.[309] (Interview with Heike, October 2, 2003, in Eula)

Vera, who has multiple roles as a teacher of Sorbian, reviewer and author has the same opinion as the above two artists: "*I do not separate leisure time from work sometimes, because they overlap so much*"[310] (interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus). For instance, as a reviewer, Vera goes to a book reading or a theater play not only for pleasure, but also for work.

Seen in the relationship between work and leisure defined above by three of my informants, aspects of their work often cascade into their leisure time because "the activities, friendships, and satisfaction that are a result of work spill over into leisure" (Auster 1996: 4). Furthermore, it can be noted that the binary relation between work and leisure is disrupted in the above cases. For these three women, the term leisure does not stand in opposition to work as conceptualized in the negative definition of leisure, in other words work and leisure are not a static dichotomy (see Hlavin-Schulze 1998: 127; Auster 1996: 5). In this dualistic perspective of work and leisure being totally separate, "the leisure activities are chosen to compensate for dissatisfaction with work" (Auster 1996: 5). This view actually prioritizes work, while leisure is described as recovering and resting from work (Hlavin-Schulze 1998: 127). In this sense, leisure connotes "free time" (ibid.) from work. The rigid demarcation between work and leisure can be traced back to the 18th century (Thien 2005: 23). Since that time, work time and work places (and the separation of work places from living space) have been clearly regulated (ibid.). In this context, leisure time is rendered as the restful part of a clear-cut working time (Thien 2005: 24). Moreover, the industrialization of the 19th

[308] Cf. [...]oder gehe ins Museum, also was ich auch, was unbedingt zu meinem Beruf gehört, mir Ausstellung anzuschauen, auf dem Laufend zu sein, oder sein zu wollen, ich muss es mich; das könnte ich auch als Arbeit bezeichnen, aber auch als Freizeit, also weil es einerseits zu Beruf gehört, andererseits ist es macht es sehr viel Spaß und Freude und ist entspannend, oder man trifft Leute usw., also das geht schon sehr aneinander über oft.

[309] Cf. Wenn ich reise oder unterwegs bin, dann habe ich immer einen Zettel und einen Stift dabei, und wenn ich lese, hat das auch Einfluss auf meine Bilder, das ist bei mir, gibt es diese Trennung nicht zwischen Arbeit und Freizeit. Eigentlich arbeite ich immer.

[310] Cf. Ich sehe das gar nicht so sehr getrennt von Arbeit manchmal, weil sich vieles überschneidet.

century hierarchized leisure time to function as compensation for particular activities missing from work and consequently as a stabilizing factor for work (see ibid.).

In his analysis of the difficult relationship between work time and leisure time in history and in the present day, historian Klaus Thien who currently teaches in Vienna describes the above relationship between work and leisure as "modern leisure time" characterized by the rigid rhythm of machines and work time (2005: 24). In this post-modern age, simultaneity occupies the main terrain in the relationship between work and leisure. The dominance of information technology and the concomitant process of rationalization have resulted in work shifting to service sectors with increased demands on individual performance, self-awareness and level of education (2005: 26). The increasing level of education and prosperity offer people the possibility to free themselves from traditions and to develop their individuality (ibid.). As Thien further asserts, the essential characteristics in this post-modern epoch is that "life patterns are less pre-determined, but rather must be negotiated"[311] (ibid.). In this sense, as seen in the cases of the above three women, their leisure time can be seen as the product of how they individually negotiate a temporal agreement between work and leisure.

4.3.2 Involvement in Women's Organizations

Some informants do not think they have time for leisure activities. In a way, this implies how they view leisure time in their lives. They do not specify what leisure means to them, but rather what they do during their free time. For example, as Helga told me, she does not have "wonderful leisure time activities" because she has to take care of someone and she drives to his home almost everyday (interview with Helga, October 6, 2003, in Dresden). Nevertheless, she has many friends with whom she usually goes on outings or whom she meets to exchange views and experiences (ibid.).

The same goes for Lydia. She scarcely has time for leisure activities, but she is active in the women's theater and women's affairs in Bautzen. Before having told me about her involvement in women's affairs, Lydia clarified that her activities have nothing to do with the Sorbs. Later I asked her to describe what she does in the women's center, she stressed again, "*It really has nothing to do with Sorbian-ness at all*!"[312] (Interview with Lydia, October 3, 2003, in Bautzen). Lydia and her friends initiated a women's center in Bautzen shortly after Reunification:

> *It [the women's center] is something that only exists in the West […]. At the time, we actually only intended to set up a network for women because we noticed that, shortly after the Wende in the 90s, we were on our own here. We were concerned about maintaining our ability to work. That was my original intention. Then one of my good friends came to me. We went to Berlin together. There was [an organization named] "Lila Freunde". Its name was Lila before. Our [idea of a] women's center was inspired by that*.[313] (Ibid.)

[311] Cf. [...] dass Lebensmuster weniger vorgegeben sind, sondern ausgehandelt werden müssen.
[312] Cf. Das hat wirklich mit dem Sorbischen überhaupt nichts zu tun.
[313] Cf. Das ist eine Form, die es nur im Westen gibt […]. Damals wollten wir eigentlich nur ein Netzwerk für Frauen gründen, weil wir gemerkt haben, damals, das war kurz nach der Wende, also so in den 90er Jahren, hier bricht was weg, und wie schaffen wir es sozusagen, unsere Arbeitsfähigkeit zu erhalten. Das war ursprünglich meine Intention. Und dann kam eine gute Freundin von mir, zusammen sind wir nach Berlin gefahren, da gab es dann so Lila Freunde. Lila hieß das früher. Und da war die so davon inspiriert.

Lydia defines this women's center as "*a place, where women can meet for very different reasons. It is also a place where they can talk with each other, where they can get help and support each other, and where various events and activities are held*"[314] (ibid.).

Women's organizations, such as the women's center in Bautzen established by Lydia and one of her friends, can be seen as manifestations of personal involvement in society (see Moore 1988: 165ff.). It also means that Lydia locates herself socially as a member of particular social groups (see Gerhard 1995: 142). Members of a certain social group usually have similar social locations and a certain social status or share the specific experience of marginalization (Gerhard 1995: 143). For instance, in the case of Lydia, the very reason for the foundation of the women's center lies in providing women with support and aid in their daily lives. Political upheaval and social transformation especially put women from the former *DDR* through a tough experience in life: unemployment. For the women of the former *DDR*, unemployment is a simultaneous new experience because almost all women (over 90%) were incorporated into waged labor. Unemployment not only traps women in financial difficulty, but it also affects their emotional state, which in turn results in physical illness (Weißbach-Rieger 1994: 7). The women's center is positioned as a place where women in need can receive social care helping them cope with social inequality (see Wilz 2004: 444). Lydia's involvement with women organizations, in my view, can be understood as a social construction of gender. By this I mean that her gender identity is produced in the process of her "doing" (her participation and establishment of women's associations, devoting herself to social affairs) when she locates herself in particular social situations (see Gildemeister 2004: 132).

4.3.3 Writing as the Textualization of Life

Petra reads, writes, goes hiking, plays the piano, listens to music and goes to concerts in her leisure time. Among other things, she has begun to write short stories since 2002. Her short stories are

> *small tragedies or non-tragedies, small slices of life. It is a method where you certainly are close to your own material. It concerns mostly women of my age, the first-person character, and small town life because this is my experience, or [I write] the material which I know the best.*[315] (Interview with Petra, September 23, 2003, in Bautzen)

In Petra's short stories, the characters are drawn from her own experience. She is particularly interested in people from the lower class who she sees as being more interestingly than the rich. Besides people from the lower class, Petra also employs

[314] Cf. [...] ein Ort, wo sich Frauen begegnen können, also aus den verschiedensten Motivationen heraus, wo sie mal untereinander reden können, wo es Hilfe und Unterstützung gibt, wo es verschiedenen Veranstaltungen gibt.

[315] Cf. So kleinen Tragödien oder nicht Tragödien, kleine Lebensausschnitte, und das ist so ein Weg, dass man natürlich sehr am eigenen Material erstmal daran ist, also es sind meistens erst mal Frauen in meinem Alter, die Ich-Figuren, weil das sozusagen, erstmal, und auch Kleinstadt, und das ist meine Erfahrung, oder das Material, das ich am besten kenne.

Sorbs as figures in her stories. As she noted, these ideas are inspired from her daily experiences in getting along with the Sorbs and her observations in Bautzen. For instance, she wrote a small text concerning "*the smoldering hostility of the Germans here [in Bautzen] toward the Sorbs*"[316] (Petra's letter to me from March 15, 2006). This is her personal experience and observation of everyday life in Bautzen. As she emphasized, "*it [my story] is authentic, not artificial*" (talk with Petra, April 3, 2007, in Bautzen; recorded in fieldwork note on April 3, 2007). She further pointed out that, "*although what I write is a small occurrence in our everyday lives, people need to learn to reflect on it*" (ibid.). Furthermore, Petra contextualizes such subliminal discrimination against the Sorbs in her text within the atmosphere of a small city such as Bautzen. Some of Petra's friends who emigrated from other cities told her that they felt people in Bautzen had less contact with others. Petra explains, saying that

> *Certainly, it has to with [the fact that Bautzen is a] small city, but there should not be any arrogance. It should not be like this. But you certainly meet many people who are very narrow-minded or above all, the Germans do not like the Sorbs – it comes out latently or they make jokes about them […] A small city is always a little bit like a collecting basin. (T: It could be closed.) Yes, it is a closed society. This is confinement. For me, it is problematic both for the Sorbs and for the Germans. However, I have more understanding for the Sorbs because they have not had easy time in their history*.[317] (Interview with Petra, September 23, 2003, in Bautzen)

Petra's experience is inscribed in the writing of thoughts, ideas and emotions which take place in the form of her short stories. Writing is seen as the practice with which Petra actively organizes her personal experiences and makes them meaningful. Everyday encounters between the Sorbs and the Germans in Bautzen become a socio-cultural milieu in Petra's short stories: "Every socio-cultural milieu is a textual milieu, where 'text' implies a 'weaving' of language into patterned compositions, whether spoken or scripted or both" (Rapport & Overing 2000: 407, here referring to Stock 1990). Most significantly, life in Bautzen is Petra's "text". She comes to know herself "through 'never-ending textualization', through the formulation and reformulation of a conceptual and narrative account of what life is about" (ibid., referring to Bruner and Weisser 1991). Writing is an on-going process, revising and evolving constantly (see ibid.). Moreover, "the process of life-textualization is […] a never-ending interpretation and reinterpretation. Its textual status is not in the strict sense determined exclusively by acts of speaking and writing, but depends instead upon acts of conceptualization" (Bruner & Weisser 1991: 136, quoted in Rapport & Overing 2000: 407). As the case of Petra shows, her writing about her daily experiences concerning latent discrimination against the Sorbs reflects how she conceptualizes the cohabitation of Germans and

[316] Cf. Die schwelende Feindseligkeit der hiesigen Deutschen gegenüber den Sorben.
[317] Cf. Das hängt natürlich auch ein bisschen mit der Kleinstadt zusammen, und das soll aber auch keine Arroganz sein, also soll es auch nicht sein, aber es begegnen einem natürlich viele Leute, die dann in ihrem Denken auch zu eng sind oder also bei den Deutschen vornehmlich, die Sorben nicht mögen, [...] oder wo da latent so rauskommt oder ihre Witze machen [...] Kleinstadt ist ja immer so ein bisschen ein Sammelbecken. [T: Das könnte geschlossen sein.] Ja, eine geschlossene Gesellschaft, das ist die Enge, das beschreibt es ja, das ist mir im Sorbischen problematisch wie im Deutschen und fürs Sorbische habe ich aber etwas mehr Verständnis, weil die Sorben es historisch auch nicht leicht hatten.

Sorbs in Bautzen. Petra is "storying" herself. Simultaneously, she is constructing her life through her personal narratives by means of writing. To conclude with Ruth Finnegan, a British anthropological and sociological analyst of artistic activity (oral literature and music), "'the self' is inevitably 'storied' and identity lies in the narratives constructed by the storying self" (Finnegan 1997: 76).

4.3.4 Vacations

4.3.4.1 "It is Important to Get Away…"

Edith is an artist. For her, there is no separation between vacation and work. As she explains, "*as an artist, it is a complex of work time and free time. There is no difference between them. Vacation is thus included in this complex, somehow*"[318] (interview with Edith, September 8, 2003, in Pließkowitz). Edith personally does not think much of vacation because she loves to work; however, it is important for her to go away. Vacation is considered as a compromise made between her and her husband. For instance, her husband is fond of going to the seaside, as he loves to go swimming. Edith goes with him, but in fact, she wants to go some places where she can think. There she finds something that could be interesting for her art. Consequently, she says she perhaps

> *would not call it vacation at all because it has become such a habit, but you could call it a study trip. I mean, it is already beautiful here [in Pließkowitz], and you do not really have to go away, actually. Nevertheless, it is important to go away in order to get new impressions.*[319] (Ibid.)

Edith has been to Poland, Slovakia, Gomera (the Canaries), but her favorite country is France, which she associates with a sort of awareness of life. Besides, she has a French friend there. Edith usually visits museums or goes to exhibitions, or just goes to the market with her French friend to buy some vegetables, fish and the like.

Edith conceptualizes vacations as the blending of work and tourism. This point echoes the views of Ina, Heike and Vera earlier concerning the merging relationship between work and leisure. It is appropriate for Edith to signify vacation as study tour for her art. In this sense, "going away" is not reified as a contrast to a dissatisfaction with work (see Hlavin-Schulze 1998: 134), rather it is an enlargement of the horizons in her life. For instance, a trip to France not only broadens her art, but also lets her experience another way of living. Experiencing another way of living during vacation grants Edith a space for experiencing life afresh, while it offers her "a room for experiment, play and creativity" (Henning 1999: 43). In this vein, it can be concluded that spending holidays in France, for Edith, involves two aspects: On the one hand, it exceeds the normative restrictions of everyday life (Henning 1999: 43ff.); on the other hand, one of her biographical components – her occupation as artist – merges her

[318] Cf. Es ist komplex als Künstlerin, gibt es nicht die Arbeitszeit und Freizeit, sondern das ist komplex und deswegen ist der Urlaub da irgendwie mit inbegriffen.
[319] Cf. Ich würde das vielleicht auch gar nicht so als Urlaub bezeichnen, weil es so Gewohnheit ist, aber man könnte es auch als Studienreise bezeichnen, hier ist es so schön, dass man eigentlich ich nicht wegfahren musste, aber es ist wichtig, wegzufahren, um neue Eindrücke zu sammeln.

vacation experience with her work.

4.3.4.2 "You Just Went from Rostock to Zittau…"

"*You just went from Rostock to Zittau*" is how Petra describes the limited freedom of travel in the former *DDR* (interview with Petra, September 23, 2003, in Bautzen). During that time, nearly the half of the population used to take at least 14 days of vacation every year (Ruban 2003: 246). Approximately two-thirds of the *DDR*'s citizens spent their holidays within the *DDR* (ibid.). Travel to foreign countries was only allowed within socialist countries. The favorite country to visit was Czechoslovakia, and the second was Hungary (ibid.). For the citizens of the former *DDR*, in terms of travel, there was a tremendous difference between before and after the Reunification of Germany. Under the former *SED* regime, travel was arranged by the following three suppliers: 1) the department in charge of vacations of the *Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (hereafter *FDGB*) and the *Volkseigene Betrieb* (*VEB*, Publicly Owned Company); 2) a state-owned camping organization; 3) the travel agency of the *DDR* and *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (*FDJ*, Free German Youth) (Freyer 1998: 409). At work places, vacation place was allocated by the *Ferienkommission der Betriebsgewerkscgaftsleitung* (the vacation commission of the trade union committee) in coordination with company management (ibid.). The conditions for being allocated a holiday place were based on of the number of years of work, age, family scale and "social activity" (ibid.). As Erika told me, it was actually not easy to be allocated with a quota for a vacation through the *FDGB*. In her working group, there were two quotas free every year: "*People fought fiercely over the quota. Only the political best got it*!"[320] (Interview with Erika, September 23, 2003, in Panschwitz-Kukow). Erika never received the allotment. Neither did Elenore, who always took her vacation with her family in the Thuringian Forest and the Erz Mountains. She emphasized that because of the *FDGB*, she and her family were never lucky enough to spend their holidays on the Baltic Sea that was the favored place for vacation during the *DDR*.

Having not been allotted a vacation somewhere, Erika then discovered that she could take her children to an ecclesiastical institution (St. Ursula Heim) for their holidays. Children could learn there, "*However, they did not tell others where they had been. They could say the place, but they were not allowed to tell others that we were in the St. Ursula Heim. That would only cause trouble*"[321] (ibid.). During the period of the former *DDR*, Erika and her family visited their friends and went to the institution above for their vacations. It was not free to travel, and Erika and her husband could not afford to travel to other communist countries. But as asserted in the preceding, if you were "*totally red and a bigwig, then you could book a tour to Cuba or Bulgaria*"[322] (ibid.). Since the Reunification, Erika has been to Majorca for four times, to western German cities, and other countries.

[320] Cf. Um diese Plätze wurde heiß gestritten, und dann bekam es bloß der politisch Beste.
[321] Cf. [...] dass sie das nicht sagen, wo sie waren, sie konnten sagen den Ort, aber dass wir dort in diesem St.Ursula-Heim, wegen mir, waren, das durften sie nicht sagen, wir auch nicht. Das hätte uns großen Ärger eingebracht.
[322] Cf. Man konnte bloß, wenn man ganz rot war, und Bonze, dann konnte man so eine Reise nach Kuba buchen oder nach Bulgarien.

4.3.4.3 "I Suddenly Could Go Everywhere, but I Could Not Go Anywhere… "

> *My son was born in 1989. During that year, I could suddenly go everywhere, but I could not go anywhere because I had him [Tobias] and I could not. This was very problematic: "Now I could go everywhere and could not go away because of my family situation*."[323]
> (Interview with Vera, October 1, 2003, in Cottbus)

Vera's son, Tobias, was born handicapped. As a single mother, it was very hard for her to bring a small child with her, although she had the freedom to travel after the collapse of the former communist regime. Before the political upheaval, the freedom to travel was restricted within the political territory, while thereafter, the turning point in her life, the birth of Tobias, once again circumscribed her within the realm of family. In terms of travel, as was the case of Vera, a paradox contradiction and inconsistency between her personal history and the collective situations dominate: "*It was difficult to get over at first*", as Vera describes her feeling, "*but later it got better. Gradually, we also set off to travel*"[324] (ibid.). Vera felt that she actually wanted to travel around Germany at first. So far, Vera has been to many places in Germany, as she is a person who "*always needs to change*"[325] (ibid.). For example, Hindensee Island offers her placidity and peace, while Travenmünde and Lübeck connect her with Thomas Mann's *Die Buddenbrocks* which she has read at least five times. She also went to southern Germany, which led her to her family history because her mother came from the Black Forest.

4.3.4.4 Traveling to Slavonic Countries: A Journey in Search of "Home"

It is generally argued that tourism differentiates between life at home and travel because tourism offers tourists different life experiences from their everyday routines in a certain space and for a certain period of time (e.g. Abram & Waldren 1997: 2, referring to Smith 1978; Henning 1999: 43ff.). In this sense, travel refers to a journey, a crossing over from familiarity to adventure. However, some of my informants are in the search for a "home" while on holiday, rather than exoticism. In this process, their sense of belonging to the Sorbs and to the Slavs is articulated. At this point, there is a need to revaluate Henning's argument about social relationships during vacation. According to Hans-Joachim Knebel (1960), "in the holiday world, one is a tourists and nothing else. All other roles fade in importance: occupation, social status, nationality, age and sex"[326] (Henning 1999: 51). However, in the specific context of tourism, which includes some of the women studied here, ethnic identity comes to the foreground. Johanna describes her trip to Carinthia, Austria, as follows:

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[323] Cf. 1989 ist Tobias geboren, und zum gleichen Zeitpunkt konnte ich plötzlich überall hinfahren, aber ich konnte nicht überall hinfahren, weil ich hatte und nicht konnte. Das war sehr problematisch: „Jetzt kann überall hinfahren und konnte nicht weg, weil ich meinen Familie, Situation so hab."
[324] Cf. Das war schon erstmal schwierig zu verdauen, aber das hat sich dann gegeben, und nach und nach, wir sind dann auch gefahren.
[325] Cf. Ich muss ja immer was wechseln.
[326] Cf. In der Urlaubswelt ist man Tourist- und nichts anderes. Alle anderen Rollen treten zurück: Beruf, sozialer Status, Nationalität, ja auch Alter und Geschlecht.

> *Many Germans go to Austria for vacation, also to Carinthia. We also did this. However, of course we were conscious in Carinthia of the Slovenian minority. It might be no concern of the Germans, but we Sorbs are certainly particularly interested in the Slovenes, for example, and under which conditions they maintain their culture. We of course compared ourselves to them.* [327] (Interview with Johanna, September 22, 2003, in Bautzen)

Going to Carinthia draws Johanna into a renewed encounter with her own experiences as a member of the Sorbian minority in Germany because she becomes familiar with how it is for other minority groups, such as the Slovenes in Austria. Besides, the belongingness of the Slavonic peoples as minorities living in German-speaking countries makes Johanna feel close to the people there, as exemplified in her friendship with the host at the guest house in Carinthia.

Mathilde (born in 1939) loves to take a vacation with her friends in the Slavonic countries because she understands the language there. Besides the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia, Mathilde also has been to Croatia and Montenegro. As she said, "*I am fond of hearing Slavonic languages around me because it makes me feel good*"[328] (interview with Mathilde, September 29, 2003, in Dresden). Like Mathilde, Emma also loves to spend her holidays in the Slavonic countries. This has to do with her major at college (Slavonic Studies), but she also wants to immerse in a "*complete Slavonic language community*"[329] (interview with Emma, November 7, 2003, in Cottbus). Emma sees such a complete Slavonic language community as a compensating balance for "weak" Lower Sorbian communities where Sorbian native speakers stop speaking their own language when a non-Sorbian speaker approaches them. For the non-Sorbian speaker's sake, they cease talking in Sorbian and change to German. Such situations bother Emma, hence, she consistently tries to keep speaking Lower Sorbian when in such situations as noted above. In Emma's eyes, places such as Lower Sorbian institutions should be the bastion for safeguarding the Sorbian languages. However, people there talk to each other in German as soon as somebody who does not speak Sorbian is around them. Consequently, Emma loves to take a vacation in Slavonic countries because nobody speaks German and therefore keep speaking his or her own language. As Emma said, all people speak Polish in Poland. In talking about this theme, Emma emphasized the word "immersion" (*Eintauchen*) repeatedly. I suspected this has to do with her emotional connection with the other Slavonic peoples and their languages, but Emma said that it is not only the result of this emotional bond, but rather "*it is really this immersion, to know, aha, there is a complete, real and healthy Slavonic language structure, in comparison with our miserable Lower Sorbian language structure*"[330] (ibid.).

Helga is a Catholic Sorb. Her embarking on a pilgrimage from Warsaw to

[327] Cf. [...] nach Österreich fahren vielen Deutsche im Urlaub, und auch nach Kärnten, und wir haben das auch gemacht, aber wir haben natürlich in Kärnten, auch bewusst wahrgenommen, da es da eine slowenische Minderheit gibt. Und dann spürt man wieder, das Sorbische; das wäre den Deutschen vielleicht egal, und wir als Sorben haben uns natürlich für die Slowene besonders interessiert, welche Bedingungen sie da haben, ihre Kultur zu pflegen, und haben das natürlich mit uns verglichen.
[328] Cf. Ich habe gern die slawische Sprachen um die Ohren, da fühle ich wohl.
[329] Cf. Eine geschlossene slawische Sprachegemeinschaft.
[330] Cf. […] wirklich das Eintauchen, zu wissen, aha, hier gibt e seine geschlossene, richtig gesunde slawische Sprachstruktur, gegenüber unserer mickrigen niedersorbischen Sprachstruktur.

Tschenstochau where the Black Madonna is worshipped has partly to do with her religion. However, for her, being together with the Sorbs who are integrated in one Polish group is one fundamental reason for her to take part in this pilgrimage:

> *So far I have participated twice. I was in a Sorbian group, which was integrated in a Polish group. […] The Poles can pray in the Sorbian language, and the Sorbs can say a pray in Polish. In this respect, it is a good community. I also experienced the Sorbs as a whole*.[331] (Interview with Helga, October 6, 2003, in Dresden)

Seen in the above cases of Johanna et al., tourism acts a medium through which some of the women studied search for something familiar: the same experiences as members of a minority, the same Slavonic root and Slavonic language. This contrasts with the widespread view on tourism as proposed by Smith (2006), who refers to Urry (2002)" "tourists are essentially looking for difference when they travel" (2006: 18). Smith further explores the relationship between home and abroad by referring to Craik:

> Tourist reveal in the otherness of destinations, people and activities because they offer the illusion or fantasy of otherness, of difference and counterpoint to the everyday. At the same time, the advantages, comforts and benefits of home are reinforced through the exposure to difference. (Craik 1997: 114, quoted in Smith 2006: 18f.).

As noted above, it is usually understood that tourists want to experience something different from home when they travel. However, some of the women studied long to experience sameness during their trip. Reading my informants' statements, tourism in Slavonic countries can be seen as a field in which their sense of consensus and homogeneity as a Slavonic whole and as a Sorbian unity is articulated. In my view, their journey in search of a "home-like" feeling, particularly one created through the same Slavonic origin and languages, is actually evocative of difference from Germans and the German language in Germany. Ostensibly, travel to Slavonic-speaking countries is considered here to be an expression of identity. However, it is important to note that "identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their ability to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside'" (Hall 1996: 5, see also Abram & Waldren 1997: 4). The identities constructed by the women interviewed when traveling can be grasped as demarcations of a difference between a Slavonic "us" and a German "them". To conclude, preferring to travel to Slavonic-speaking regions and countries has much to do with women's Sorbian identities. On the other hand, however, the East German past may also account in part for their fondness of spending holidays in the places where they feel at home. As discussed in the preceding sections (Chapters 4.3.4.2 and 4.3.4.3), East German citizens were only permitted to take trips to other socialist countries, most of which were Slavonic-speaking. After Reunification, they finally had the freedom to travel wherever they chose, but the Slavonic-speaking countries are still their favorite destinations. Therefore, the experiences of the women

[331] Cf. [...] das habe ich eigentlich auch, zwei Mal habe ich das jetzt mitgemacht und zwar ist das eine sorbische Gruppe, die in einer polnischen Gruppe intergriert ist, [...], und die Polen können also die sorbischen Gebete, und die Sorben können die polnischen Gebete. Insofern ist es eine gute Gemeinschaft; man erlebt, ich erlebe auch ein mal die Sorben alle zusammen.

interviewed can be understood as a blending of a double legacy of Sorbian descent and the *DDR* political system of the past.

4.4 Cultural Consumption

Consumption constitutes a significant part of our everyday life, as "we become what we consume" (Mackay 1997: 2). Drawing on sociological analysis, for example Bourdieu's work on distinction (2002[1984]), the consumption of goods renders the consumers' social status visible and social distinction is therefore created. France, a modern industrial society, serves as a case study based on the survey conducted in 1963 and 1967/68 on a sample of 1,217 people in which Bourdieu defines social relations both economically and culturally. In society at large, cultural practices and preferences vary according to social classes in which the level of education and social origin plays a role. In a word, the consumption of symbolic goods is loaded with cultural value, articulates taste and signifies the social identification that differentiates social groups. In this sense, culture organizes social life while it distinguishes individuals, groups and social classes from one another. Distinction is thus created. Furthermore, the consumption of symbolic goods conveys taste that marks class and distinction. Consumption produces identities of a particular culture and symbolic boundaries are created. People's different relations with cultural objects render class difference visible. For Bourdieu, the different practices of cultural consumption are socially structured, as exemplified by one of his prominent terms *habitus*: a structured system of disposition that generates and structures practices. This predisposes people's taste and judgment.

Bourdieu's conceptualization of cultural consumption provides a framework for understanding different social group's relations with culture. Despite the diversity in Bourdieu's study, his emphasis on socially structured cultural consumption with a focus on class without taking other social divisions into consideration, e.g. gender, race or age (Mackay 1997: 5), hardly convinces me that women under study can be seen as dealing with cultural objects in their everyday lives while approaching their sense of identity. This is because it is important for me to look at those studied as acting agents and to explore how they get along with, use, experience and interact with cultural objects and how they produce meaning in their cultural practices. Moreover, these women's strategy of consumption is related to their social status, e.g. age, occupation. However, notably, other social differences also play a role in the deployment of consumption practices, such as ethnicity. It is significantly relevant in my study, for example, that women's ethnic background motivates their consumption of ethnic media, and I will discuss it in the following.

Now this is a place to explore the notion of consumption. It is vital to note in cultural scholarship and social sciences that the concept of consumption has been reoriented toward the view that consumers are no longer considered to be passive victims of capitalism, processes relating to mass production, and advertisement manipulation, but should rather be conceived as active and creative agents (Welz 1996: 7; Mackay 1997: 3). Furthermore, the conception that consumers play active and creative roles in the process of consumption suggests that their "every act of consumption is an act of production, for consumption is always the production of meaning." (Fiske 1989: 35, see also Welz 1996: 7). In this sense, consumption is

therefore connoted as a kind of activity and creativity because, in the practices of consumption, consumers appropriate, rearticulate and recreate the consumer materials or artifacts to fit their own ends. This point of view, which contrasts with the negative attitudes toward consumption as exemplified in the work of sociologist Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), and the critique of mass culture proposed by the Frankfurt School (discussed in Merkel 1999: 19f; Mackay 1997: 3f.), draws on the subculture theory of cultural studies, e.g. John Fiske (1989) and the work of French historian Michel de Certeau (1984). The creative capacities of consumer practices and the production of meanings created by consumers are central ideas for the approaches of the above researchers to cultural appropriation in everyday life. In the account of de Certeau, for example, everyday life is considered to be productive consumption. As Mackay remarks, following Fiske (1989a, 1989b), through everyday practices, goods and services are transformed, and identities constituted (Mackay 1997: 7).

The above considerations on the concept of consumption will, in my view, afford us an extended perspective on how to grasp the ways the Sorbs approach their sense of belonging. The form of consumption in this section centers on cultural consumption (news media and the arts) as a key element of the process in which those under study continually constitute and reconstitute their sense of self. In this process, consumer practices, when viewed as social projects and associated with ethnic specificity, gender and other social positionings produce a certain kind of personal experience, a certain sort of selfhood; these social projects in turn yield a particular strategy of consumption (see Friedman 1994: 16f.). In this part, I will focus on the consumption of news media (newspaper, radio, television) and the arts (music and literature) of those studied. These two fields are particularly important to the Sorbian language for they render the presence of the Sorbian language visible in public sphere, which signifies the shifting of the Sorbs' strategy for language development from defensive safeguarding to active procreation. However, what I am more concerned with here is the consumption strategies deployed by those under study. In their consumer practices, not only ethnicity, but also several other social factors motivate them to practice a certain kind of news media and music consumption. The interplay between these factors is multivalent and complicated. Nevertheless, it is also in the process of consumption that meanings are created, and another form of production thus ensues.

4.4.1 Mediated Experiences through Media Consumption

In studies on the Sorbs, there are only a tiny number on media consumption. Ludwig Elle, the Sorbian researcher of cultural scholarship, has blazed the trail in this field. In his ethno-sociological questionings of the *Sorbische Kultur und ihre Rezipienten* (Sorbian Culture and Its Audiences) conducted in 1987 and published in 1992, Elle formulates the contour of the mass media reception of the Sorbs in five municipalities: Turnow (Cottbus district, Lower Lusatia), Malschwitz (Bautzen and Niesky district), Trebensdorf and Zeißig (Schleife region, middle Lusatia), and Rosenthal (Kamenz district, Upper Lusatia) (1992: 69ff.). The concept of mass media that Elle puts forward is informed by the following considerations: First, the role of the mass media in the context of transmitting information related to an ethnic group and in the context of the information structure integrated in the ethnic group; second, the influence the

application of the mass media exerts in the ethnic culture (1992: 69). Elle is concerned with the way the mass media influence the cultural development of the Sorbs and the fashioning of the Domowina's nationality policy (1992: 70). Elle not only analyzes the development of the Sorbian mass media, he also illustrates an order of precedence for the themes that are interesting to newspaper readers. He maps a field for us with which to capture several quantitative profiles of the Sorbs' media reception, such as radio audiences categorized by age, region, social group, occupation and consumer opinions regarding content changes for radio programs. As to television, Elle can only show the quantity and topics of the contributions associated with the Sorbs during the *DDR* because there were no Sorbian programs until 1990. In addition to Elle's study, which tends toward closed questions and is illustrated with quantitative outcomes, Britta Höhne-Porsch's study of the everyday life of bi-cultural couples (e.g. Russian and Sorb, Kirghiz and Sorb, German and Sorb, and African and Sorb) is also important for this study. Höhne-Porsch is concerned with how those studied approach media. (2005: 183ff.). Not only their own experiences with media, but also their choices regarding the media reception of their children are involved in her study. She elucidates culturally fluidity and spatial transnationalism in the bi-cultural couples' experiences with reading literature, watching television, listening to the radio and appreciating music.

Elle's and Höhne-Porsch's studies provide us with a breeding ground to understand the media reception of the Sorbs and their experiences in media appreciation under the framework of biculturalism. Elle contributes to a new terrain in the study of the Sorbian people. He recognizes the significance of radio programs that are circulated and broadcasted in the Sorbian languages as part of the Sorbs' cultural life but he also focuses on the media's effect on the consumer practices of the Sorbs. Such an approach, however, renders those studied as passive, over-generalized audiences whose situational, emotional, cultural contextualization and personal life experiences are invisible (see Wurm 2006: 37). In Höhne-Prosch's study, those studied are shown as social actors and stand in the center. People's choices regarding the media across various levels of identification (regional, national, transnational, transcultural) reveal a multi-layered identity construction. However, there is no explicit theoretical support for her observation. Hence I will attempt to apply an anthropological framework in order to move studies on media consumption into the realm of research done on the Sorbs while trying to examine diverse media practices that are now starting to be mapped.

Following Roger Silverstone, Ginsburg et al. have attended to the observation that media reception takes place "beyond the living room" while media production occurs "beyond the studio" mainly because they come about as part of "a set of daily practices and discourses […] through which complex act is itself constituted" (Silverstone 1994: 133, cited in Ginsburg et al. 2002: 1). This further suggests that media practices must be understood in a wider cultural and social context. As Ginsburg and co-authors observe, the ethnography of media is conducive to tackling "not only how media are embedded in people's quotidian lives but also how consumers and producers are themselves imbricated in discursive universes, political situations, economic circumstances, national settings, historical moments and transnational flows" (2002: 2). Michel Herzfeld also puts forward a similar view, asserting that "ethnography provides an ideal access to the point of conjuncture between local perceptions and practices on the one hand and mass-produced forms of representations on the other" (2001: 299).

Additionally, ethnography helps to see recipients and consumers as individual agents, rather than categorize them as a "whole", which would ignore a set of differences (social class, social values, political allegiances, cultural background, etc.). In the process of media reception, audiences actively produce and create meanings through their social experiences and personal histories (see Wurm 2006: 44).

4.4.1.1 Newspapers

At this point, I will take my informants' practice of reading the newspaper as the first step toward exploring the incipient study of media in research of the Sorbian people. Along with the *Tagespiegel*, *Berliner Zeitung* and *taz* (*Tageszeitung*), Franziska (born in 1972, has been living in Berlin since 1991) reads *Serbske Nowiny* (Sorbian News, a Sorbian newspaper in the Upper Sorbian language) everyday. Notably, these different newspapers that Franziska reads reveal a complexity in her reading habits. Each newspaper has its own political orientation: *Tagesspiegel* was launched after the World War II in September 1945 under the license of the Information Control Division of the American military government is mostly read in the Western part of Berlin. The *Berliner Zeitung* first appeared in May 1945 under the Red Army; since August 1945, issued by the *Magistrat* (City Council) of Berlin, and later the *Zentralkomitee* (Central Committee) of *SED* in 1953. *Berliner Zeitung* was circulated in the former *DDR* and stood for the *SED*'s policy and it is primarily read in the Eastern part of Berlin. Since the Reunification of Germany, *Berliner Zeitung* has presented itself as a critical, liberal and open-minded newspaper. The newspaper *taz* appeared in West Berlin in 1979 was identified by the *Stasi* (Staatssicherheit, state security) as an enemy paper from the Left during the former *DDR*. Franziska reads the *Tagespiegel* because it is distributed free of charge at her workplace, otherwise she usually buys the *Berliner Zeitung* and the left-oriented *taz*. As to *Serbske Nowiny*, Franziska receives it a day later by mail, but as she said, "*it is really important for me to know what is happening there*!"[332] (Interview with Franziska, November 14, 2003, in Berlin) She feels that the newspaper connects her with "her" Lusatia. According to Franziska, generally, the content in *Serbske Nowiny* differs little from other newspaper in the German language. Since the same news can be read in other newspapers, Franziska primarily reads the news concerning Lusatia in order to be informed if there is any village celebration, a forthcoming theater play, or to read about Sorbian-related politics. She also reads the obituaries closely, for she still knows many people there. Her mother also tells her such news on the telephone. For Franziska, her concern with obituaries reveals her attachment with people in Lusatia, and she asserts that "*the connection is certainly always there*"[333] (ibid.).

Anita, who has lived in Berlin for several years, shares Franziska's view as stated above. Anita expresses her feeling more strongly:

> *I am also very happy that I have it [Serbske Nowiny] and I can recommend it to anyone who is away from his or her hometown. Whether people think that the newspaper is poor in quality or not, nevertheless, it is something. You have a Sorbian word and Sorbian photos.*

[332] Cf. Das ist schon für mich auch wichtig, dass ich weiß, was so los ist.
[333] Cf. Die Verbindung ist schon immer da.

> *You know people, or you are familiar with whole stories*.[334] (Interview with Anita, November 11, 2003, in Berlin)

For Anita, the quality of the newspaper, which she does not specify here,[335] recedes into the background. Most importantly, this newspaper affords her a means to relocate herself in a space with which she is familiar. For other women living in Dresden, they not only read a daily newspaper in the German language, they read journals in the Sorbian language as Franziska and Anita do. For example, Birgit (born in 1947) and Frauke read the journal *Katolski Posoł* (Catholic Messenger), which is published every two weeks. Martina reads the *Sächsiche Zeitung* (Saxony Newspaper), *Serbske Nowiny* and *Nowy Casnik* (New Newspaper, a Lower Sorbian weekly newspaper).

As the above cases illustrate, for those who live in other cities outside Lusatia, e.g. Berlin and Dresden, a newspaper in the Sorbian language acts as a medium through which their sense of attachment to the Sorbs and their homeland is articulated. Their act of reading a newspaper or journal seems an objective reality in appearance but is actually a product of imagination. As noted in the preceding chapters (see Chapters 2.1. and 2.2), where I draw on Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities", I clarify how the Sorbian language – as a printed language in a newspaper – has played a significant role in evoking, framing and constructing Sorbian consciousness and identity in the course of the history of the Sorbs. Act of reading a newspaper, in Anderson's view, has a symbolic function in the "fictioning" of national community. Although the act of reading a newspaper is ostensibly an individual consumer's practice in media consumption, it is actually embedded in the mass ceremony of reading which is performed in silent privacy while paradoxically numerous unknown readers replicate this performance simultaneously (1983: 39). In this process, reading a newspaper contributes to the production of nations and the shaping of national imaginaries (see Ginsburg et al. 2002: 11). Moreover, by participating in reading the newspaper, the individual's engagement in a joint ritual shared with a significant but absent public is manifested (see Gillespie 1995: 11). For the women studied, as noted above, their practice of reading the newspaper not only helps them to identify with a wider general public (see Moores 1997: 241), but also helps them to interact with others. The observation of the British scholar of film and television studies, Marie Gillespie, regarding media consumption is especially of significance here. As she puts it, "social interaction and relations are no longer dependent on simultaneous spatial co-presence" (1995: 3). Following Giddens (1990: 18ff.), she further points out, "instantaneous communication through a variety of media fosters intense relation between 'absent

[334] Cf. Ich bin sehr froh, dass ich die habe und kann jedem empfehlen, der weg von der Heimat ist, dass er auch seine Zeitung anschafft. Ob man der Anfassung ist, dass die Zeitung schlecht ist, dass es trotzdem etwas ist, es ist sorbisches Wort und sorbische Bilder, in dem Sinne, dass du die Leute kennst oder mit den ganzen Geschichte vertraut bist.

[335] One of my informants, Lydia criticized the quality of Sorbian newspapers. She blames their lack of financing, journalists and staff for their unprofessional quality. In the introduction to the book *Ethnic Minorities and the Media. Changing Cultural Boundaries* (2000), Simon Cottle identifies some key factors and constraints in the media production of ethnic minorities: limited finances, resources and training opportunities, systems of patronage and corporate gatekeepers, institutional conservatism and organizational hierarchy, producers' attitudes and cultural capital, source dependencies and source inhibitions, professional obligations and the "burden of representation", audience expectations, temporal production cycles, and the conventions and aesthetics of media forms (Cottle 2000: 17).

others'" (Gillespie 1995: 3).

4.4.1.2 Radio and Television Broadcasting

In the Sorbian discourse of identity construction, broadcasting (radio and television), like newspaper consumption, is considered as serving a means by which a sense of Sorbian-ness can be articulated and the Sorbian language can be maintained and promoted as a language with more prestige (see Chapter 2.2). This is also true for the Sorbs who were persecuted under the Nazi regime, as was the case of Emma's father. For him, radio and television broadcasts in Sorbian voice his feelings of self-consciousness as a Sorb:

> *In this generation, the positive aspect has come back. Of course, much [their positive feelings about being Sorbs] is achieved by listening to the radio [in the Sorbian language]. It's always a question of image, also for language and this half hour once in a month [the television program in the Sorbian language]. This has made it an image again and, as a result, socially acceptable in a different way*.[336] (Interview with Emma, November 7, 2003, in Cottbus)

As can be seen in the case of Emma's father, the media representation of ethnic minorities, such as the Sorbs, reproduces a positive image of the Sorbs with which he identifies.[337] That is to say, for Emma's father, his sense of belonging to the Sorbs is mediated through broadcasting.

Emma's father is therefore an example for how ethnic media and cultural consumption – the production, "reading" and use of representations – plays a key role in constructing and defining ethnic identities, national and other cultural identities (see Gillespie 1995: 11). However, an important question needs to be raised here: How is a sense of belonging and identities constructed through the images and sounds transmitted in media? The answer here is once again redolent of Anderson's coined concept "imagined communities". Anderson's insight into a national community imagined in print (newspaper, novels) can also be borrowed to address the idea that broadcasting are used, deployed and constructed to create a sense of belonging to a national community or ethnic group. The peculiar characteristics of broadcasting – spatial separation and temporal simultaneity – make such ideas possible. Concretely put, "images and sound get produced and consumed in places situated at a distance from one another, yet the moments of transmission and reception in broadcasting are virtually simultaneous" (Moores 1997: 214). This experience of time and space is engendered by "disembedding" (Giddens 1990, see also Moores 1997: 238; Gillespie 1995: 15f.). Taking experience and self-identity in late-modernity as a point of departure for his discussion, Giddens states that "dismbedding" results from the fact that social relationships have increasingly become estranged from the local sphere to extend across geographical distances. Taking it a step further, "the advent of modernity

[336] Cf. In dieser Generation ist das Positive zurückgekommen, natürlich auch viel durchs Rundfunkhören, also das ist auch immer eine Imagefrage, auch für die Sprache auch durch diese halbe Stunde im Monat, dadurch ist es natürlich wieder ein Image und dadurch ist das dann auch wieder anders salonfähig.
[337] See my discussion in Chapter 2.2.4.

increasingly tears space away from space by fostering relations between 'absent' others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction" (Giddens 1990: 18).

In the sense of this time-space compression, our relations with others become no longer enclosed in a bounded place, and our experiences in day-to-day life are shaped by events from afar (see Giddens 1990: 19). Through listening to the radio program in Sorbian every morning, Johanna gets to know about happenings occurring miles away. The content of radio programs in the Sorbian language, according to Johanna, is the same as those in the German language. Every topic is possible, the only difference is that there is no world news in the Sorbian language program; it rather complements news programs in German. Otherwise, there is current news about Lusatia and Saxony. News on the Sorbs, such as the current cultural events and activities held by the Domowina are certainly included in the program. For the women in this study, listening to broadcasts in Sorbian signifies their identification with the Sorbs. To some degree, this is their link with their ethnic identity, yet it is certainly not the whole story. At this point, it is very important to say that, through the activities of media consumption, consumers' identities undergo proliferation. For example, Johanna's sense of belonging is variably connected with the regions of Lusatia, Saxony, eastern Germany, or Germany as she hears about various happenings on the radio. In a word, Johanna's process of constructing identities is mediated through her interaction with mass media. Such is also the case with Edith and Ina. Both of them enjoy themselves watching arte (an international television channel co-operated by Germany and France), especially soft news, background stories and documentaries concerning foreign countries. In the process of watching TV, their sense of self and experience of everyday life become intricately interwoven with experiences that differ from their own. For instance, Edith told me a documentary about a star cook who cooked a meal of 30 courses. By watching this program, she learned that creativity can be also accomplished through simplicity. This is just one minor example; Edith's life and self-formation intertwine with this mediated experience of watching the star cook. Different forms of experience are thus shaped in this process of interweaving (Thompson 1995: 233, see also Moores 1997: 239).

The media affords us of a space for imagination. As Appadurai tells us, "the imagination – expressed in dreams, songs, fantasies, myths, and stories – has always been part of repertoire, in some culturally organized way, of every society" (1991: 197). Through mass media, "more persons in more parts of world consider a wider set of 'possible' lives than they ever did before" (ibid.). The very reason lies in the fact that mass media "present a rich, ever-changing store of possible lives" (ibid.). In Appadurai's account, the deterritorialization of persons, images and ideas causes such a change to be enacted:

> More persons throughout the world see their lives through the prisms of the possible lives offered by mass media in all their forms. That is, fantasy is now a social practice; it enters, in a host of ways, into the fabrication of social lives for many people in many societies. (1991: 198)

Several examples of this include Franziska's enjoyment of a French movie about

difficult themes in life and her reading novels written by her favorite English writer Terry Pratchett, who writes about an unreal world with profound jolliness, historical novels or ones about different cultures, or *Harry Potter*. Another example is Heike's love for Italian movies illustrating someone's life story or fate and for novels by Argentine writers or Kafka. Helga also reads novels in Sorbian, classic works in German, and translated novels such as *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* by Jung Chang. Erika, on the other hand, chooses novels and literature in both Sorbian and German, and Emma is interested in novels in Upper and Lower Sorbian languages, German and Russian.

4.4.1.3 Interaction with the Media

As noted at the very beginning in this section, consumers are not powerless "audiences" consuming media, but are rather individual agents who actively and creatively "read" or interpret the "text" or media. Consumer creativity, as Michel de Certeau celebrates, plays a vital role in the process of consumption.

> [Consumption] is devious, it is dispersed, but it insinuates itself everywhere, silent and almost invisibly, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order. (de Certeau 1984: xii-xiii)

"Ways of using the products", as Herzfeld put it, involves an important fact:

> Audiences are active interpreters of the material they read, see and hear, and because they often wax eloquent about their responses. People came to media from the perspectives of their many subjectivities, which have been influenced by the whole multitude of discursive practices encountered during their lifetimes. (Herzfeld 2001: 301)

For my informants who grew up in the former *DDR*, such as Gabriella (born in 1969), television programs such as the "*DDR*-Show" produced by RTL and broadcasted in 2003, former *DDR* citizens are ludicrously represented as people who drove "*Trabis*" (*Trabanten*) (interview with Gabriella, September 26, 2003, in Bautzen). Gabriella explains such ridiculous "stereotyping" in an oppositional way by claiming that "*we were not therefore doing poorly. We were satisfied with our lives. People were happy and people had what they had*"[338] (ibid.). Gabriella's interpretation of televisual output expresses her way of interacting with television images. Gabriella's sense of collective identity as a member of East Germany thus ensues. Such a television image as seen in the "*DDR*-Show" is, for Gabriella, "a product of social and discursive processes mediated through established cultural forms" (Cottle 2000: 10) fixed in the minds of western Germany.

Franziska's interpretation of life in the *DDR* can be seen in her reading *Zonekinder* (Children of the Zone). This is another example of charting how a consumer produces meaning in the process of media consumption. In her novel *Zonekinder* (2003), Jana

[338] Cf. Uns ging's deswegen nicht schlecht. Wir haben für uns, jeder für sich, denke ich mal doch zufrieden gelebt, und man war glücklich und man hatte das was man hatte.

Hensel describes her youth in East Germany. She intended to reconstruct her memory by writing about her life experiences before and after the Reunification of Germany. The author was 13 years old when *BRD* and *DDR* united. Franziska was 17 at that time, and she revisited the past through the different lense than that of Hensel's. As she said, "*I did not have that blissful image of the DDR, that everything was wonderful*"[339] (interview with Franziska, November 14, 2003, in Berlin). To the contrary, in Franziska's eyes, it was not so. Franziska was raised in a Catholic family in Panschwitz-Kukau, a village near Bautzen. Her parents did not let her participate in activities slanted with political ideology, such as the *Jugendweihe*. Because they did not participate in the *Jugendweihe*, Franziska, her friends and other children in her neighborhood who also did not participate in such an activity were sent to other classes to do homework or had lesson such as *Staatsbürgerkunde* (school subject involving the ideological education of socialist citizens) while their classmates went on outings. Furthermore, as Franziska recalls, just before the *Wende*, when she was in the 10th grade, books which Franziska thought were good were banned just because they were "*not o.k. any more from a political angle*"[340] (ibid.). In Franziska's view, many things from that time should be examined critically. Franziska's interpretation of her life during the former *DDR*, which is different from what Hensel portrays, manifests as an important aspect proposed by sociologist John Thompson:

> The messages transmitted by the mass media are received by specific individuals in definite social-historical contexts. These individuals […] actively interpret and make sense of these messages and relate them to other aspects of their lives. This ongoing appropriation of media messages is an inherently critical and socially differentiated process […] There are systematic variations in their appropriation of media messages, variations which are linked to socially structured differences within the audience. (Thompson 1988: 366)

4.4.2 Musical Practices

My contact with "Sorbian" music began with attending the International Summer School held by the Sorbian Institute in 2002. This school teaches the Upper and Lower Sorbian languages and offers people who are interested in learning about the Sorbs access to various aspects of Sorbian culture, including music. On the first day, besides the course program, students were given a songbook called *Serbske Spěwy* (Sorbian Songs). During our course, one teacher played "Sorbian" music for us in a phonetic lesson. We also took lessons in singing Sorbian songs. Additionally, "Sorbian" music was also heard on other occasions and outings at the Summer School, e.g. when we went to a "Sorbian" pop concert in Bautzen (July 21, 2002). We also saw elder women dressed in traditional Schleife costumes who sang Sorbian songs for us at a farmhouse in Mühlrose (July 21, 2002), music was played during dinner in a restaurant in Cottbus (July 28, 2002), and a choir of young people sang songs in the Sorbian language at the final ceremony where students were granted a document of attendance at the Summer School (July 31, 2002). The singing lessons and musical experiences gave me pleasure that eased my feeling of deep frustration caused by learning the Sorbian language

[339] Cf. Ich habe nicht dieses verklärte DDR-Bild, das alles so schön war.
[340] Cf. [...] nicht mehr in Ordnung war politisch gesehen.

because it is very difficult for me to learn Sorbian because of its complicated grammar and arduous pronunciation. This experience bears similarity with Malcolm Chapman's description of his own experience in learning a Celtic language and involvement with "Celtic" music during his fieldwork stay in Scotland (Chapman 1994: 33).During my fieldwork, some women interviewed told me that "the Sorbs love to sing" or "the Sorbs sing a lot when they meet each other at celebrative occasions". In addition, I myself also experienced that people sang at gatherings such as the "Sorbian Meeting" in Dresden.

In spite of my experiences in the field as noted above, it is very important for me to note three things here. For one thing, I refuse to categorize the Sorbs as a "more musical" people than others. Stereotyping a certain people as "more musical" falls into "a superficially 'benign' expression of racial prejudice" (Herzfeld 2001: 278). What I am concerned with is not to define or label what "Sorbian" music is, but rather to explore how music is used, and in which context is it performed by those studied. For another thing, following Chapman (1994) in his study on "Celtic music", "Sorbian" music is not a residue of authentic Sorbian-ness waiting to be found and to be identified, but rather it is something that has been created by certain ways of experiencing. Finally, Simon Firth (1996), one of the leading British sociological analysts of music, states that music, as a cultural activity, is an experiential process in which identity is constructed (1996: 110).

As mentioned in the preceding (see Chapters 2.3 and 4.2.1.3), during the period of the Sorbian "national rebirth" in the 19th century, music (such as that in the book of folksongs from 1841, the song festivals and choir singing of 1845) is constructed as a means through which the Sorbs internally united themselves as a *Volk*/people, while externally resisting the homogenizing imperatives of the Germanization. Furthermore, music and choir singing is regarded as a vital way of revitalizing the Sorbian language because songs have spoken words. The lyrics embody a Sorbian ethnicity that is mainly defined by the element of language. In the framework of a national movement, music is used to articulate a sense of belonging to the Sorbs as a collectivity. In this way, music is also employed by the Sorbs to erect boundaries. Music serves as a symbol of identity and thus expresses Sorbian-ness. If we take music lessons at the International Summer School as an example, Sorbian-ness is displayed and transmitted to international and German-speaking students by means of music. However, in my view, musical performances as such are very easily misconstrued as cultural essentialism, or "the necessary flow from social identity (whether defined in terms of race or sexuality or age or nation) to musical expression (and appreciation)" (Firth 1996: 108). For example, it can be easily assumed that the Sorbs only listen to Sorbian music, or Sorbian music must somehow reflect or represent the Sorbs. Such assumptions not only fix the Sorbs in a certain taxonomy, but they also veil the musical practices of everyday life. In this respect, however, ethnography provides us with the ideal approach to uncovering people's actual experiences with music as exemplified by the women in this study.

Anita likes to listen to Dido's English songs and RnB (rhythm and blues, pop music that was started by African Americans). Anita also likes the punk rock band Die Ärzte from Berlin, classic music and relaxation music. Music makes Anita feel relaxed, particularly when she is in her garden. If she is in an especially good mood, she plays

the Red Hot Chili Peppers or Coldplay and dances to the music. Although she does have Sorbian CDs at home, she scarcely listens to them (interview with Anita, November 11, 2003, in Berlin).

For Lydia, "Sorbian-ness" plays a minor role in her music appreciation. As she said, "*I have to say honestly, I do not like to listen to music played in a concert by the National Sorbian Ensemble. For me, they are not professional.*"[341] (Interview with Lydia, October 5, 2003, in Bautzen) Listening to "Sorbian" music offers Lydia no pleasure. However, in her daily life, she inevitably listens to it at home because part of her husband's work has to do with Sorbian music.

In Angela's leisure time, she sings in a Sorbian folk choir. She also enjoys classic music played by an orchestra very much. For instance, she goes to orchestra concerts in Gewandhaus, Leipzig, Kreuzkirche, Dresden, and in the cathedral in Görlitz: "*It is always a worthwhile experience for me*!"[342] (Interview with Angela, September 24, 2003, in Buatzen) She also says "*it is really like heaven on earth*"[343] (ibid.) for her when her favorite conductor conducts the orchestra.

Emma is fond of listening to both modern Sorbian music and old Sorbian folk songs. Her family loves to sing old folk songs. When she is at home with her family in Drehnow, Lower Lusatia, they always have a "family concert": Emma plays guitar, her mother plays piano, and together they sing and play songs with her mother's sisters and brothers. Some of the songs are in the Upper Sorbian language. One of Emma's favorite songs in Upper Sorbian is named "Wenn ich die Vögel ziehen sehe" (When I see birds flying) and it offers her a feeling of "wistful nostalgia". Additionally, Emma also sings church songs in German because the Wendish/Lower Sorbian language was not used in the church until 1986. Since 1986, the inhabitants of Emma's hometown, Drehnow, initiated a church service in the Wendish language held every two or every three months. People have begun to work on a church songbook in the Wendish language. In terms of singing, "*in our case, church music (hymns) is really more in the German language, and folk songs are more in the Sorbian language. [They are] mixed*"[344] (interview with Emma, November 7, 2003, in Cottbus). In addition to singing, Emma loves to listen to music by James Müller.

Heike usually listens to Jazz, but when she drove me from Eula back to Bautzen, I became acquainted with her "mobility" in performing musical activities. On our way to Lusatia, besides our casual talk, she sometimes sang English songs or whistled a pleasant melody. When we approached Lusatia, Heike told me that she always sings a "greeting song" with her daughter in the car when they see the "blue mountains" of Lusatia. Her daughter plays flute when she sings. Heike also showed me a flute that was under my seat. For Heike and her daughter, singing this "greeting song" to Lusatia is a "family tradition". After telling me about this "family tradition", Heike sang this song as we were approaching Lusatia (fieldwork note, October 2, 2003).

As these five cases demonstrate, my informants "use music to locate themselves in quite idiosyncratic and plural ways" (Stokes 1994: 3). Moreover, the pluralistic nature

[341] Cf. Also einem Konzert, muss ich ehrlich sagen, vom Sorbischen Nationalensemble, das höre ich nicht so gern, weil sie für mich unprofessionell sind.
[342] Cf. Das ist für mich immer erlebenswert.
[343] Cf. Das ist dann wirklich der Himmel auf Erden.
[344] Cf. Kirchenmusik bei uns wirklich eher deutschsprachig, und dazu eben Volksliedgut ist eher sorbischsprachig, gemischt.

of their musical practices shows the sheer profusion of identities and selves that they possess (Stokes 1994: 4). Furthermore, as was the case with Angela and Lydia, the linear relationship and continuity between culture, place, group and individual are disrupted. Their forms of music appreciation are not restricted within their ethnic ascription. Except Lydia, who does not specify her favorite music reception, the other four women show us their variety of music choices, which transcend the limitations of places and cross spaces. Appreciating a variety of music connotes that these women experience themselves in different ways (see Firth 1996: 109). Heike's musical activity on our way to Lusatia, in my view, best illustrates that her experiences with music are in a constant flux. In various moments, she experiences a different self by singing English songs, whistling and singing the "greeting song". To conclude, my informants' experiences with music exactly echo the premises that Firth draws on to explore "music and identity". First, identity is *mobile*; it is a process not a thing, a becoming and not a being. Second, the experience of music – of music making and music listening – is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process* (1996: 109, emphasis Firth's).

4.5 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have taken several dimensions of everyday life – work, children education, leisure activities and cultural consumption – as realms in which the women interviewed take up positions when various activities occur in certain contexts. Work may be the pertinent element in certain situations, while gendered experiences may be in others. Ethnic origin, family background, religion, age, and political positions might also be the relevant factor in still other cases. Their identities are continually created and recreated as their experiences in everyday lives "as" Sorbs, women from eastern Germany, members of a particular women's group, single mothers, artists, tourists, consumers of mass media, or fans of a certain kind of music – are shifting. Simultaneously, they locate themselves somewhere – on the ethnic, gendered, cultural, social, historical, political, or economic plane – and so on. However, it is important to note that "all locations are provisional, held in abeyance. One is never truly anywhere and if locations or positions are to be specified, they will always be in the plural"[345] (Moore 1994: 2). The women interviewed are able to cross cultural boundaries through their practices of everyday life. With creativity and imagination they are able to free themselves from the external determination deeply rooted in the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects. This is to suggest that the women interviewed act as agents who are able to actively deal with culture; they are able to recreate, redefine, reinterpret and reconstruct it.

The actions performed by women in various contexts spotlight their situational, multi-layered, and relative sense of identity. This is to say that they are far from belonging to "one" culture; rather they are entwined in variety of "cultures", as their different activities take place in various contexts. As Andrew P. Vayda, Professor of

[345] This quotation is an abridged form of the introduction of Moore's *A Passion for Difference. Essays in Anthropology and Gender* from 1994. It is contextualized in the discussion of issues of Moore's belonging as scholar working on feminist and anthropological writings. However, for me, Moore's point of view as quoted above also shows a similar pondering over the themes of identity construction as seen in my study. I thus quote her here.

Anthropology and Ecology at Rutgers University, aptly says, following Goody (1968: 9), in the modern world, for example in India, a person's diverse doings come about in different mental as well as material contexts so that he or she acts in one context "as" a Muslim or Hindu, in another "as" a trader, in another "as" a member of a particular caste or patronymic group (Vayda 1994: 326). Nowadays, as Vayda argues, it is not the case that many of us are members of a particular culture or live in culturally specific cognitive worlds; on the contrary, we construct our own nests of routine or identity with twigs and straws picked up from maybe a dozen "cultures" (ibid., he draws on Bryden 1989b; Bryden 1989a; Barth 1989: 130; Clifford 1988: 23). Vayda is concerned that empirical and theoretical justification in anthropology should focus on the actions, variations and change of those studied. This is an anti-essentialist view in anthropology that sees variations as fundamental reality (1994: 320). He objects to structuralist interpretations like those of Sahlins (e.g. in his analysis of Hawaiian history) and others because they fail to afford any sufficient empirical or theoretical justification for presupposing that certain mental phenomena or ways of thinking are essential traits of particular societies or cultures and that this explains why people choose certain actions on the grounds of their birth, upbringing, citizenship, etc. and these might also be regarded as belonging to those societies or cultures (1994: 326).

Vayda's viewpoint reconsiders the conceptualization of culture. Regarding the assorted everyday practices of those studied, it is evident that they involve themselves in more than one culture at the same time or one after the other in the course of their lives. Their multiple identities are therefore formed in their participation in various activities. In this sense, the assumption that there is "one culture" that is an isolated, bounded and self-contained unit gives way to conceptualizing "cultures" as a reality of complex modern societies. Moreover, notably, the variations of those under study call our attention to internal difference within a group. This disrupts the conventional concept of culture in anthropology that had assumed the homogenous conflation of culture, people and territory. There is no one-to-one relationship between culture and society or between culture and ethnicity. Blended and hybrid cultures are the hallmark of the contemporary world, especially in the globalized world, where cultures are flowing and dynamic. It is thus not easy to draw clear-cut boundaries between cultures. It is not unproblematic to ascribe an individual to a certain culture today. However, at the same time, as Ulf Hannerz (1992) reminds us, there are still cultural universes, or partial universes, that stay relatively constant and spatially confined to places.

Finally, I have dealt with a wide range of issues related to identity construction and everyday life practices in this chapter. Other scholars may have already explored several of the themes that I took up, while some topics are still new in the field of research done on the Sorbian people. Therefore, my intention was to put the data and perspectives of already-existing phenomena in ordinary life into a new perspective by drawing on cultural anthropology.

CHAPTER 5 POSITIONINGS AND REPOSITIONINGS ACROSS CULTURES, GENDERS AND IDENTITIES

There is no absolute form of identity within one individual. This is also true for a people, as "people cannot be addressed as colossal, undifferentiated collectivities of class, race, gender or nation" (Bhabha 1990: 220). Multiple identities, collective or individual, are products of the negotiation of various elements, be they historical trajectories, cultural experiences, political conjunctures or social relations. They also emerge at various moments in which acting agents variably position themselves in different relations to others. In this sense, "the Sorbs" is never understood as "a" people inherent in an oneness fixed in the realm of the natural and the innate, but rather exist as a multiple form of identification. The same goes for each individual who identifies her- or himself with the Sorbian. In the previous chapter, day-to-day life experiences of those under study shed light onto the fact that their identities are constructed with a variety of cultures in different contexts. With everyday practices, dynamic, multi-layered, situational and relational identities are being constructed across a series of subject positions and sets of differences.

The analysis based on a variety of case studies in Chapter 4 offers an alternative reading of the notion of identity that is commonly understood in the conventional Sorbian discourse (see Chapter 2) and dislodges the essential, unitary, homogenous associations of "an" identity by enriching them as configurations of "identities". Nevertheless, the mere discussion of the multiplicity of meaning inextricably intermeshed in the process of identity construction leaves something unsaid, that is: The process of positionings and repositionings that deepen our understanding of the concept of identity. This is a restless process of identification in which the power of redefining is crucial. For me, redefining not only decenters the established, dominant discourses on identities associated with ethnicity, culture and gender, but also turns the once-excluded voices on their heads and imbues them with new meanings. New meanings are not located in a strict, literal sense of "new" as opposed to "old", but are read in an active and transformative reconfiguration of the traces of other meanings and discourses. With this consideration, I try to unearth new sites in which my informants construct new conceptions of Sorbian culture and identity as well as their identities as East German women in this chapter. The main concern will first be how those studied deal with the cultural resources that denote Sorbian-ness, such as customs and traditional costumes. I am also concerned with how those studied undergo a process of re-identification through experiences previously devalued as marginal and as Other but which simultaneously challenge and disturb the established boundaries set up by the dominant power, thereby estranging its authority. Moreover, it is also my intention to elaborate how new meanings are being created, new sites are being opened, and other positions consequently emerge in this process of redefining identities in terms of a sense of belongingness to a "homeland", ethnicity, a sense of self and gender.

5.1 Traditions reinterpreted

Celebrations are connected to a tradition that is "a medium of identity": "Whether

personal or collective, identity presumes meaning, but it also presumes the constant process of recapitulation and reinterpretation" (Giddens 1995: 80). The link between identity and celebration as an expressive form of tradition demonstrates how social actors function as conscious agents who reinterpret and reproduce tradition. However, as explored in Chapter 2.3, the dimension of agency is missing from the Sorbian discourse on tradition. In the Sorbian nationalist projects of building a Sorbian *Volk*, for example, tradition is seen as primordial Sorbian cultural heritage. In the identity work of the Sorbs, tradition is employed to accentuate Sorbian-ness and is simultaneously utilized as an explicit attribute for them to distinguish themselves from others. The way that tradition is constructed as an essence immortalized through a continuity of pristine origin rooted in the past leaves the Sorbs as acting agents aside while also failing to render people's everyday lives visible because group members are seen as mere bearers of Sorbian tradition. As analyzed in the last section of Chapter 2.3, however, tradition is not fixed as a natural given connected to a distant past, but is rather reevaluated as a process of interpretation in which social actors creatively and actively attribute meaning in and for the present. In this section, I will therefore try to demonstrate how the women interviewed actually deal with and recreate the Sorbian tradition manifested in celebrations as exemplified in Easter celebrations and traditional Sorbian costumes.

5.1.1 Easter Procession Rides: Continuity and Change

"For the Sorbs, Easter is considered to be more important than Christmas because the Sorbs think much more about the resurrection of Jesus Christ than His birth" (fieldwork note, April 8, 2007). Lydia's son told me what Easter means to the Sorbs on my visit with Lydia and her family during Easter time in Bautzen. Moreover, the significance of Easter to the Sorbs is spelled out in the pamphlet *Easter with the Sorbs* (Sorbian Cultural Information Center, Bautzen, 1997), where it states, "Easter is for us [the Sorbs] the greatest festival". In the eyes of the Sorbs, Easter is not only the most important religious tradition that is historicized with continuity, but it is also a special custom of Sorbian-ness. As noted in the brochure above, the Sorbs celebrate Easter in a special way. Easter fires, Easter singing, bringing in Easter Water and egg rolling are Easter customs of the Protestant Sorbs. Walking with clappers, praying and singing hymns are Easter customs for some Catholic Sorbian parishes in Upper Lusatia. Among others, the best-known ritual is *Osterreiten*, Easter Procession Rides.

As can be read in the information brochures on *Sorbian Customs and Traditions in the Course of the Year* (Sorbian Cultural Information Center, Bautzen & Foundation for the Sorbian Nation, 2005: 16f.): The root of the custom of Easter Procession Rides can be traced back to pre-Christian times. It was believed that riding on the fields could protect the germinating crop from misfortune brought on by the Devil. This custom later mutated to a Christian procession under the influence of Christianization. Several days before Easter, it is necessary to groom the horses, braid their manes and polish their harnesses. On Easter Sunday morning, the manes of the horses are curled and decorated with flowers. Easter Riders dress themselves in frockcoats, riding boots and top hats. Before Easter Riders ride out of their farmyards, their wives sprinkle them with holy water. Lined up in pairs, riders from each parish gather around their church. The priest presents them with the church banners, a statue of the Risen Christ and a

cross, and blesses them. The good news of Christ's resurrection is then carried to the neighboring parish on horseback. The processions take place in Sorbian Catholic parishes in Bautzen [346], Croswitz, Radibor, Storcha, Ostro, Nebeschütz, Ralbitz, Wittichenau and Panshwitz-Kukau.[347] First, the Easter Riders ride around the church three times, when riding out and back the processions may not meet. When the riders with their horses return to the home village in the evening, they ride around the graveyard three times, pray for the late Easter Riders, others who passed away and ailing people of the village, and several times they pray for God's support.

As stated in various brochures above, it is asserted that the Easter Procession Rides in Catholic Sorbian Lusatia have been practiced in the same way for centuries. At the same time, it is also emphasized that such religious custom is not a folklore event, but is rather a declaration of Christian faith and an expression of the national consciousness of the Sorbs. Two of my informants, Johanna and Edith, indubitably confirmed the essence passed down in Easter Procession Rides as noted above in the pamphlets. For Johanna, "*the Easter Ride is very traditional. It is also a church festival. And it should be kept like this. The Easter Riders fight against every single commercial exploitation. People still respect it*"[348] (interview with Johanna, August 16, 2002, in Bautzen). Edith also stressed that Easter Procession Rides are absolutely not a folklore performance, but rather they constitute the history of identification of the Sorbs. It is a custom, because "*it is really from the village, a centuries-old tradition, and people really endeavor to keep it up. It is so traditional that, for example, people do not sell grilled sausage by the wayside*" [349] (interview with Edith, September 8, 2003, in Pließkowitz).

The discourse on Easter Procession Rides as stated above concentrates on the consistency that tradition offers. The description "it is the same as centuries ago" enhances the patinated historical depth embodied in the Easter Procession Rides. In this sense, "constant cultural form" (Kaschuba 1999: 179) has been long since retained. However, some other informants' experiences in the following illustrate another dimension concerning the Easter Procession Rides – a "change of function" (ibid.). Easter time is not only a good occasion for holding a family reunion, but also for a reunion among friends. Especially those who do not live in Lusatia, such as Frauke, Helga and Mathilde, who live in Dresden. They usually go back to their hometown in Upper Lusatia at Easter time. As Frauke said, "*it is really the reason [for me] to back to Lusatia again*"[350] (interview with Frauke, October 4, 2003, in Dresden). Sometimes they bring their friends with them back to Sorbian Catholic Lusatia because their

[346] Easter Procession Rides in Bautzen were discontinued for a certain period of time. Sorbian chaplain Józef Nowak revived the procession in 1927. From 1972 to 1992, no procession was held. The latest "revival" took place in 1993 (pamphlet published by Beteiligungs- und Betriebsgesellschaft Bautzen & Marketing-Gesellschaft Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien, 2007). In the brochures on Easter in Bautzen, no specific reason was given as to why the procession was stopped.

[347] In the pamphlet on Easter in Bautzen (published by Beteiligungs- und Betriebsgesellschaft Bautzen & Marketing-Gesellschaft Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien, 2007), there is a time table and a map of the processions. The processions take place between pairs of parishes: Bautzen-Radibor, Ralbitz-Wittichenau, Wittichenau-Ralbitz, Croswitz-Panschwitz, Panschwitz-Croswitz, Radibor-Storcha, Storcha-Radibor, Nebelschütz-Ostro, Ostro-Nebelschütz, and Ostritz/Markt-Kloster-St.Marienthal.

[348] Cf. Das Osterreiten ist sehr traditionell, auch ein kirchliches Fest und das soll es auch bleiben, und da wehren sich die Osterreiter gegen jegliche Vermarktung, und das wird bislang respektiert.

[349] Cf. Das ist wirklich aus dem Dorf heraus, jahrhundertealte Tradition, und die bemühen sich auch wirklich, das so fortzuführen, so traditionell, z.B. keine Bratwürste am Wegrand zu verkaufen.

[350] Cf. Das ist wirklich dann ein Grund, auch wieder in die Lausitz zu fahren.

friends are interested in the Sorbian custom of Easter Procession Rides. For example, Frauke showed me a photo in which she and her African friend visited Easter Procession Rides. She also told me that she usually meets her friends or relatives when they visit this religious custom. Easter Procession Rides mutates into an occasion of reunion among friends for those who live in other cities, such as Frauke, Helga and Mathilde. Simultaneously, it changes into a field of intercultural communication, as was the case of Frauke and her African friend, or Lydia and her family members, relatives, friends and myself. Some of the visitors are Sorbs living in Bautzen, some are Germans traveling from other cities, and there was even one Polish-speaking couple from the United States of America.

Easter Procession Rides highlight the Easter of the Sorbs. The form, the old ritual persists, while its meaning for the people (e.g. Frauke) changes. Kaschuba's analysis of Christmas in terms of its form and function (1999: 179ff.) provides me with a standpoint to analyze the Sorbian Easter Procession Rides. For Kaschuba, the relationship between the constancy of forms (*Formkonstanz*) and change of function (*Funktionswandel*) is a useful concept for interpretation[351] in exploring the "continuity and change" (*Kontinuität und Wandel*), the interplay of which influences the process character of culture (Kaschuba 1999: 165ff.). Kaschuba begins with how Christmas is constructed as a "German" (*deutsches*) Christmas. Numerous texts and articles on cultural history continually reproduce scenarios connected with the "German" Christmas, referring to the Christmas tree as proof, as well as the garland of evergreens with four candles for the Sundays in Advent, Christmas songs, ideas for gift-giving, and Christmas recipes. However, as noted in cultural history, this special tradition in Germany began to develop in the 19th century when religion virtually non-existent in everyday life and less and less people went to church. In addition, the bourgeois family provided a stage for Christmas where family members exchanged presents, sang Christmas songs and so on. Family was also staged as a place of education where children learned to recite poems and to sing Christmas songs. Furthermore, the technical and industrial revolution (railways that brought trees from the forest to cities; manufacture of the garland of evergreens with four candles for the Sundays in Advent and Christmas decoration) constituted one important part of the "German" Christmas. As Kaschuba points out, people still celebrate Christmas today, but they do so differently: People *can* use all the rituals and the components of Christmas, *but do not have to* (emphasis Kaschuba's). Meanwhile, people celebrate Christmas in diversified ways since everybody celebrates his/her Christmas according to his/her needs and in his/her own way. In Kaschuba's account, Christmas is not merely a Christian celebration, but it also simultaneously constitutes the ritual of people's leisure life and celebrations in terms of relaxing, resting, consumption and traveling. In this sense, Christmas connotes leisure time and is the highlight of leisure culture.

Kaschuba's discussion on Christmas as noted above offers me a perspective with which to interpret the relationship between continuity and change as exemplified in Easter Procession Rides. This religious custom is considered to be a significant Sorbian tradition and it has been emphasized that it has stayed the same as it was centuries ago.

[351] Another three interpretative concepts are: 1) tradition, or "discovery and invention" (*Tradition: "Fund und Erfindung"*); 2) Folklorism, or "God save the king" (*Folklorismus oder: "God save the king"*); and 3) Non-coevalness (*Ungleichzeitiges*).

However, its interpretation and meaning undergo change – every individual, such as Frauke, has his/her own way celebrating Easter and visiting Easter Procession Rides. In the words of Kaschuba, "Christmas actually means *culture*"[352] (1999: 182, emphasis Kaschuba's). To paraphrase then, "Easter Procession Rides actually indicate culture". It has become a general cultural possession that has developed out of a religious tradition with ideological practices (ibid.). Easter Rides "belongs to the rite of people's life" (ibid.) and commemorates friends and emotion, which people connect with the Easter. Through Kaschuba's analysis, the custom of Easter egg decoration of the Sorbs can also be read in the same vein. For Frauke, Easter egg decoration is associated with a young Mexican couple who are friends of Frauke's son. They are interested in Sorbian Easter eggs out of their love of art. They even copied the dedications in the Sorbian language on the Easter eggs and took them back to Mexico. Frauke thus said joyfully, "*right now, perhaps there are Sorbian Easter eggs in Mexico*!"[353] (Interview with Frauke, October 4, 2003, in Dresden).

To conclude, taken as an example, Easter Procession Rides show us that "this is continuity that is constantly changing and offering a multitude of interpretations and meanings"[354] (Kaschuba 1999: 182).

5.1.2 Women's Experiences with Traditional Sorbian Costumes

As indicated at the beginning of Chapter 1, Sorbian women who dress in traditional Sorbian costumes are very often made to represent the Sorbs and to symbolize the embodiment of Sorbian culture both in the German and Sorbian press and in the informational pamphlets and tourist brochures on Lusatia and the Sorbs. Such representation forcibly adumbrates women in traditional costumes as representative figures of the Sorbian collectivity; what is more, Sorbian womanhood is also represented single-dimensionally in ways that reinforce and sustain their severance from the modern world. Seen in this light, women's agency is limited in a crippling and stifling way. This was my first impression of the women in traditional Sorbian costumes.

During Summer School, one-day tours were arranged on Sundays. For example, on July 21, 2002, in the morning, we went to church for Mass in Zdźěr. An old woman dressed in traditional Catholic Sorbian clothes for going to church also attended. After the Mass, one of my fellow classmates stopped this old woman and asked to take picture of her. My classmate was very happy to photograph her because of her traditional dress. I observed this and wondered if it was appropriate to take a picture of this old woman. On the same day, we had other programs, among others, we went to Miłoraz/Mühlrose in the region of Schleife where elder women were dressed in traditional Schleife costumes and sang Sorbian songs for us at a farmhouse. On that occasion, before, during and after the women's performance, students photographed them. I observed all of this, and I also took one picture of them, but at that time I still pondered what it connoted when people took pictures of them and when women were photographed. This was my initial contact with women in traditional Sorbian costumes, and it left me with several questions.

[352] Cf. Weihnachten meint in der Tat *Kultur*.
[353] Cf. Jetzt werden vielleicht auch noch in Mexiko die sorbische Ostereier.
[354] Cf. Es ist Kontinuität im Wandel, bietet eine Vielzahl von Deutungen und Bedeutungen.

After Summer School, as I started to stay in Bautzen longer for my fieldwork, I sometimes saw old women dressed in traditional Catholic Sorbian everyday clothes walking in the street, or waiting for bus at the bus stop where I also waited for the bus to visit one of my informants in a village near Bautzen. Then I met Angela's mother who happened to be staying with Angela. She wears traditional Catholic Sorbian clothing, as does Elenore's mother, Paula. All my experiences as above caused me to reconsider the representative female figures fossilized in a certain moment in time. These women are real people wearing everyday clothes! This is somewhat similar to the situation in Marburg where I live: I sometimes see an old woman wearing a traditional Hessian costume walking down the street.

According to my own fieldwork data, five interviewees (Ina, Franziska, Angela, Maria, Martina) explicitly mentioned their experiences with traditional Sorbian costumes, while another three talked about their opinion about traditional costumes. Drawing on my own research outcome, along with studies of other researchers, particularly Brunhilde Miehe (2003)[355] and Andrea Pawlikowa (2008)[356], the action of women wearing traditional costumes and the ways women deal with traditional costumes can be categorized as follows:

1) Women who always wear costumes: Among my informants, Paula always dressed in the traditional Catholic Sorbian way. According to the latest study on traditional costumes in the Catholic Sorbian region of Upper Lusatia conducted by Andrea Pawlikowa (2008), a member of the academic staff of the *Serbski musej*/*Sorbisches Museum* (The Sorbian Museum) in Bautzen, there are still 187 women between the ages of 64 and 105 years who still wear traditional costumes in the Catholic Sorbian region of Upper Lusatia and dress exclusively in the Sorbian way. Amongst them, some only wear Sorbian costumes for Mass and when guests visit (2008: 114). In Miehe's study, 20 of 24 women[357] dress in the Sorbian way everyday. Notably, some of them dressed "*städtisch*" (in town clothes) or "*bürgerlich*" (middle-class) until they got married. They changed their dress to "*bäuerlich*" (rural, most of Miehe's informants call their costumes "*bäuerlich Kleidung*", *burska drastwa* in Sorbian, meaning rural clothes), as well as Sorbian or Wendish or in Sorbian Catholic or in Schleife costumes because their husbands or parents-in-law asked them to do so. Moreover, some of them always wear traditional Sorbian costumes everyday except when they go out of town because they do not like to be looked at by others and cause a great sensation. According to some of the women Miehe interviewed, they dress in a "German" way when they are outside of their hometown.

2) Along with women who always dress in traditional costume, there are ones who dress traditionally for different occasions: Maintaining Sorbian tradition as much as possible motivates women to dress in a Sorbian way as far as this is practical and feasible (Pawlikowa 2008: 126).

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[355] See also Chapter 2.3.2.

[356] The empirical data gathered in Pawlikowa's study are the base for the exhibition "Tracht als Bekenntnis. Die Tracht der katholischen Sorben" (Traditional Costumes as an act of faith. The traditional costume of the Catholic Sorbs) from September 24, 2006 to February 18, 2007 in the Sorbian Museum in Bautzen.

[357] Miehe delves into these 32 case studies. Amongst them, 24 women are costume-wearers; another 8 researched (including 6 women, one man and one couple) are involved in costume-making. See also Chapter 2.3.2.

3) Women put high value in the esthetic expression of the traditional costumes and they wear these costumes out of a zest for life and because they like them (ibid.). Among my informants, Angela, whose case will follow, can be categorized as one of these. However, Angela only dresses in the Sorbian way on certain specific occasions and only for her Sorbian peers.

4) Women wear traditional costumes as working clothes (ibid.). These are usually women who are involved in tourism, such as waitresses at the Sorbian restaurant in Bautzen, or one woman in Miehe's study dresses in *Spreewaldtracht*" (traditional costume of Spreewald) exclusively for information events for tourists (2003: 172f.).

5) Women's wearing traditional costumes is a sign of their membership in a certain social group, such as a Sorbian choir (Pawlikowa 2008: 126). Among the women researched in my study, Maria (which case will be introduced in the following) and Martina have had experience dressing traditionally for folklore performances. For instance, Martina is a member of a Sorbian double quartet and she and other members wear traditional costumes when they give public performances in Germany and in international folklore festivals (e.g. in the Czech Republic) (Interview with Martina, September 9, 2003, in Dresden).

Additionally, according to my research, there are still women, such as Ina (whose case will be discussed in the following) and Franziska, who wished to wear traditional Sorbian wedding dresses for their weddings. However, in the end they did not do so because of a variety of reasons. For example, Franziska took her in-laws' feelings into consideration because they did not have any connection to Sorbian culture and are also not Catholic. Although Franziska's in-laws did not really object to a Sorbian wedding, she did not want to make them feel uneasy and she thought it would be exaggerated if she had her wedding in an entirely Sorbian way, including wearing a Sorbian wedding dress. Therefore she finally wore white (interview with Franziska, November 14, 2003, in Berlin).

In sum, among my informants, Angela is a particular case, while Ina and Franziska had the same wish, Maria and Martina also had the same experiences with performances. Paula, like other women who always wear costumes, dresses in a Sorbian way everyday. As noted above, there are different ways of getting along with traditional costumes. In this light, it can be emphasized that traditional costumes are not as static as they are thought to be; rather they are interpreted differently according to different experiences. In the following, Ina, Maria and Angela's experiences with traditional Sorbian festive costumes will offer an alternative reading to the common assumptions regarding Sorbian women in traditional costumes.

5.1.2.1 Between Being a Sorb and a Berliner

According to the Sorbian academic Paul Nowotny, who conducted an empirical study concerning Sorbian festivals and celebrations in the 1960's in Radibor (a Catholic Sorbian village in the district of Bautzen), "whether one traditional form or another is preserved in Sorbian weddings depends mostly on whether or not the bride celebrates the wedding in Sorbian traditional costume" [358] (1965: 117). Traditional Sorbian

[358] Cf. Ob diese oder jene traditionelle Form bei sorbischen Hochzeiten gewahrt wird, hängt zumeist

wedding attire is crystallized as the decisive element constituting a Sorbian wedding, for it not only symbolizes Sorbian-ness, but also encompasses a collective imagination of Sorbian identity. Wearing traditional Sorbian wedding costumes is interpreted as a manifestation of Sorbian cultural heritage, which embodies a complete set of practices (wearing the Sorbian wedding dress), meanings (Sorbian ethnicity and identity) and artifacts (Sorbian wedding costumes) transported from the past to the present. Moreover, body and dress are engaged in a dialogue in which the future and the past interplay (see Hager 1999: 14). The dressed body in traditional wedding costume is a vivid monument of collective history for the woman's surroundings, and it thus constitutes the identity of the collectivity to which the dressed person belongs (see ibid.). When applying such a point of view to this study, it can be stated that a bride in traditional Sorbian wedding costume is seen as representing Sorbian identity.

One of my younger informants, Ina (born in 1968), always dreamed of having a Sorbian wedding in Lusatia and wearing traditional Sorbian wedding clothes. As she said, "*It was actually always my dream to get married in the real Sorbian way in Lusatia, that is, to dress in a national costume, with all the frills*"[359] (interview with Ina, November 11 ,2003, in Berlin). However, in the end, her wedding was in Berlin, and she did not dress in Sorbian style. She and her fiancé had tried to find a restaurant in Lusatia for their wedding. But after having looked at over 10 restaurants, they were disappointed at not finding the right one. None of the restaurants met their expectations and they felt they all somehow looked the same. As Ina said "jokingly", "*maybe people from Berlin are very demanding*!"[360](Ibid.) They finally had their wedding in Berlin because the restaurant they chose had what they wanted and is part a complex including a hotel, hall, park, pavilion, and church. It was very convenient for them to combine all the wedding activities in one place. They also thought the restaurant would offer them a more "modern" atmosphere. Besides cake from Lusatia, they had no Sorbian wedding cuisine, but rather a French buffet. The Sorbian language was spoken at the wedding and all the ceremonies were conducted in Sorbian, but a part of sermon, the greetings and some procedural details were done in German for German guests.

Ina's case illustrates an ongoing process of her identity construction. In Ina's eyes, she is also a Berliner, as she has lived in Berlin since she went to college there. She also expressed her sense of connection with Berlin by claiming that "she feels at home in Berlin" during our first talk (August 21, 2002, in Berlin). The fact that Ina considers herself a Berliner is a result of her experience and social interaction with people in Berlin. Being a Berliner is one part of her identity. This also shows that her identity construction is free from thinking in terms of naturalness and biological inevitability. Being a Sorb is also part of her identity. A fluidity connecting being a Sorb and a Berliner therefore takes place. Her identity is continually constructed and reconstructed.

5.1.2.2 The Enjoyment of Wearing Traditional Costumes

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davon ab, ob die Braut die Hochzeit in sorbischer Tracht feiert.

[359] Cf. Mein Traum war eigentlich immer, eine richtige sorbische Hochzeit zu machen in der Lausitz, also mit der Tracht oder Pipapo.

[360] Cf. Wahrscheinlich sind wir als Berliner sehr anspruchsvoll.

Angela has her own traditional costume (interview with Angela, August 20, 2002, in Bautzen). She dressed in the Sorbian way at her son's wedding, for example. She emphasizes that she did not intend to demonstrate anything, or make a point, but rather she simply thinks traditional costumes are terribly beautiful. In her eyes, traditional dress is simple but also elegant. Wearing a traditional costume gives her a lively, festive feeling. Such a feeling is very important to Angela. She wants to live life to the fullest.

Angela's experience unfolds the emotional dimension involved when one is dealing with traditional Sorbian dress. First, as she notes, she owns her own traditional costumes. For Angela, the element of peculiarity inherent in the traditional costumes begins with the possession of her own. Angela has only worn traditional clothes at the private celebration of her son's wedding. She said that dressing in the Sorbian way at a public occasion would be too personal and it ought to also somehow be done with proficiency. Angela's standpoint contrasts with one of my other informants, Maria, who experienced what it was like to dress in the Sorbian style for a festive occasion in public (interview with Maria, Bautzen, August 12, 2002). People admired the beautiful Sorbian costume that Maria wore and had their picture taken with her. Maria's appearance in Sorbian costume made her the focus of attention. This exhibition connotes a positive experience for Maria. In this context, traditional Sorbian costume serves as a medium through which Maria can interact with people from western Germany. It is therefore important to note that a staged performance for tourists in which Maria and her fellow choir members sing Sorbian songs while wearing Sorbian traditional costumes is not necessarily exploitative and negative, rather "it may be an opportunity for the expression of identity" (Abram 1997: 46).

For Angela, the aesthetic quality that traditional Sorbian costumes demonstrate is also expressed an attraction to dressing in such a way. This aesthetics is illustrated best in its simplicity. Nevertheless, Angela's perception of her Sorbian costume bears similarity to that of the Swiss women discussed in Birgit Langennegger's study (2006), which concerns women's direct connection and their concrete experiences with the traditional costumes in Appenzell Innerhoden. According to Langennegger, most of those women studied describe their traditional costume as the most beautiful clothing they owned (2006: 28). This also reveals the peculiarity that traditional costumes possess. It is also exactly this peculiarity that gives Angela the feeling of difference from everyday life – it is lively and festive. This feeling can be decoded as an expression of Angela's immediate experience with her Sorbian costume. Moreover, for Angela, dressing in traditional Sorbian costume gives her a satisfactory experience because she lives life to the fullest through how she dresses for a festive occasion.

When we talked about the relationship between tourism and traditional Sorbian costumes, Angela did not have as positive an attitude as Maria did. In Angela's opinion, to the tourists, Sorbian costumes stand for something colorful. It is in this context that Angela again places emphasis on owning a Sorbian costume during our talk by saying "*if you actually have a traditional dress, you wear it*"[361] (interview with Angela, August 20, 2002, in Bautzen). She further accentuated that "*people wear traditional costumes in a sheltered place, or in sheltered company*"[362](ibid.). For Angela, sheltered company

[361] Cf. Zieht man Tracht, wenn man wirklich eine eigene hat.
[362] Cf. Zieht man in einem geschützten Raum, oder in eine geschützte Gesellschaft an. Eine so geschützte Gesellschaft ist aber die Kirche.

is church. When she was a child and a teenager, she wore clothes in the Sorbian style, and so did her children. She was told that "*it is only for Sorbs*"[363](ibid.), which also voices her opinion about traditional costumes.

Angela's point of view on Sorbian costumes in the context of tourist settings involves another dimension regarding how traditional dress is connected with the Sorbs. Angela sees wearing traditional costumes as a performance only for the Sorbs, and not for unrelated outsiders. It is an enactment of Sorbian tradition, which, by nature, is inaccessible to tourists. For Angela, the nub of tradition lies in authenticity, and she stresses the importance of having a traditional dress of one's own. Angela understands authenticity as something concrete and material, such as traditional costume, and something that serves as a symbol (see Bendix 1994: 59). This constitutes the quality of Sorbian-ness. Church is the institution that Angela considers to be the shelter of authenticity inherent in the tradition of Sorbian dress handed down from one generation to another. Angela herself is a Catholic Sorb. For her, church furnishes the bastion and the fundament for warding off the growing threat to Sorbian culture. In religious contexts, primarily in Catholic Sorbian Upper Lusatia, traditional costumes play an important role (see Miehe 2003: 180). A sense of belonging and community spirit are inspired by religious customs, for which performance is closely associated with wearing festive church dress (ibid.).

To conclude, the women discussed in this study deal with Sorbian costume in different ways. Contrary to the construction in the Sorbian discourse (as discussed in Chapter 2.3) of women as mere bearers and repositories of Sorbian culture and value by means of wearing the traditional Sorbian costume, women's practices concerning traditional dress as discussed in this subsection not only render the women into acting agents with competence and subjectivity, but they also connote the wide spectrum of different fields of experience in their life world. I thereby aim to chart how traditional Sorbian dress is viewed differently by each of those studied. My discussion began with Ina, who dreamed of getting married in the Sorbian way and of wearing a traditional Sorbian wedding dress. However, she finally chose not to do so. What the case of Ina demonstrates does not focus on whether or not she dressed in the Sorbian style, but rather on the significance of the process of her decision-making regarding not wearing traditional Sorbian wedding costume. The dress referred to here serves as a platform for my discussion on how Ina constructs her ethnic identity. In the case of Angela, whose ideas contrast with Maria's vantage points, an emotional dimension is opened up regarding how women handle traditional costumes. This provides us insight into how a traditionally dressed person, such as Angela or Maria, interprets and experiences their direct connection with traditional dress.

Each woman in these cases views traditional Sorbian dress through different lenses as they shift between various regions of experience. Their intentions of wearing Sorbian dress or their acts of wearing Sorbian clothes may in fact be motivated by their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There is no doubt that this is the case to a certain degree, but it is certainly not the whole story. Women's feelings, actions and experiences in dealing with traditional dress manifest themselves in their identity construction, which is a process in constant flux: Their gender roles, ethnic attributions, social interaction, and

[363] Cf. Das ist nur für die Sorben.

life experiences may be separated from each other, or they may flow into each other, or they may become intimately related and interweave, but they may also diverge from one another. Such dynamic processes of identity construction map the contours of how their life worlds undergo a pluralization (see Bausinger 1991: 9), for the "pluralization of life worlds" (Bausinger here refers to Berger, Berger & Kellner 1975) constitutes a significant feature of modern society. In this sense, in modern society, wearing traditional dress is a valued experience (see Langenegger 2006: 44f.). Although it may be relevant to one's cultural identity, it may not necessarily be a corollary associated with one's ethnic ascription. Rather, wearing a culturally significant outfit can be seen as wearing special clothing with enthusiasm, meaning the wearers are simply excited about the aesthetic performance of wearing traditional dress, or they simply have fun dressing that way.

5.2 Diasporic Belongings: Two Sorbian Organizations in Berlin and Dresden

In Chapter 2.1, I delved into how the concept of homeland is constructed in the discourse of Sorbian-ness within the framework of Sorbian history. Later in Chapter 3.2.4, I draw on one case study of a young girls' group to analyze how and why they territorialize their ethnic identity. Homeland, in both discussions, refers to Lusatia, which is exclusively marked as the "Sorbian homeland". The construction of "Sorbian Lusatia" is inextricably imbricated with the history of assimilation, the Sorbian claim to a unified administrative territory, and the German "dredging of Sorbian culture" through opencast mining for brown coal in Lusatia. Building on Ina-Maria Greverus' theoretical account of space and identity (1972), it is asserted that Lusatia is a life world imbued with Sorbian values of orientation for the women studied here. Lusatia is thus a space of identity for the Sorbs. However, the two organizations outside of Lusatia – *Sorbisches Kultur- und Informationszentrum e.V.* (Center of Sorbian Culture and Information, hereafter *SKI*) in Berlin and *Sorbentreff* (Meeting of the Sorbs) in Dresden redefine the meaning of homeland in the Sorbian discourse which has been deeply rooted in a clearly defined place: Lusatia. *SKI* and *Sorbentreff* offer Sorbs living outside of Lusatia a feeling of being home, and "a Sorbian community" is created in the meetings, activities and events organized by these two ethnic organizations.

Although Berlin and Dresden are not far away from Lusatia geographically and they are all located within the boundary of Germany, the cultural practices enacted in the gatherings among the Sorbs in these two cities, in a way, bear some diasporic dimensions. The term diaspora originally refers to the dispersed Jewish people and their historical experience of displacement from the original homeland and of maintaining memories and ties with it. As Khaching Tölölyan, a professor of English at the Wesleyan University in the US, has pointed out in his editorial preface to the first issue of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* (1991), "the term […] now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest workers, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community" (Tölöyan 1991: 4f., quoted in Clifford 1994: 303). Diaspora, as discussed by Tölöyan (1991), Stuart Hall (1992), Paul Gilroy (1987, 1997), and James Clifford (1994), is introduced as a concept for analyzing transnationalism, the embodiment of mobility,

boundary-crossing, and globalizations. The notion of diaspora, originally referring to a distressing dispersal, exile, endeavors of contending with collective deficits as well as a longing to return to a prior homeland, is now later employed to bring to light "the transnational working of identity-formation and to challenge fixed and essential conceptions" (Gilroy 1997: 304).

The Aguilillans moving between Redwood City (California, USA) and Aguililla (Michoacán, Mexico) as analyzed in Roger Rouse's study (1991, discussed in Clifford 1994: 303f., see also Brah 1996: 200) could provide us of a telling example to understand the lives of the Sorbs who live in Berlin and Dresden. Rouse ushers a new sort of diasporic formation in his case: Aguilillan migrants who move between their homes dispersed both in Redwood City and Aguililla have created a transnational network of settlement. Through the continuous circulation of people, money, goods, and information, a single community composed of separate places emerges. The Aguilillans who are simultaneously migrants and settlers are not in diaspora, however, "there may be diasporic dimensions to their practices and cultures of displacement" (Clifford 1994: 303). Drawing inspiration from the case of the Aguilillans, it can be stated that the life experiences of the women studied here in these two cities render their biographies, in a way, diasporic. As Clifford put it, "in the late 20th century, all or most communities have diasporic dimensions (moments, tactics, practices, articulations)" (1994: 310). Cultures and identities are constantly being made and remade in my informants' lives with and, through difference and hybridity as an ongoing translocal network between Lusatia and their residential cities, a "contrapuntal modernity" (Clifford 1994: 311) occurs.

In this section, the point I wish to make is to borrow the extended idea of diaspora as noted above to describe how the women in this study who live in Berlin and in Dresden construct their identities through their symbolic and organizational relations to Lusatia. The establishment of and participation in these two ethnic organizations are the creative processes which redefine what homeland means to them. Simultaneously, new terrains for understanding the notion of homeland for women being studied here are thus created.

5.2.1 *SKI* in Berlin

Anita[364] was born in Croswitz in 1979. She went to a Sorbian secondary school in Bautzen when she was in the 7th grade (1993). Then she moved to Berlin to study at the university in 1998. She did not have any difficulties deciding to go to the capital, as she is familiar with it and one of her sisters also lives there. In Berlin, she has her student life at the university, and she also works in a hospital on a temporary basis. For her, Berlin is a place where she studies, works and lives. However, during the very early days in Berlin, she felt different:

> *When I started studying here, I felt like something was missing. It took me a while until I realized that it was simply a Sorbian environment. When I started studying here, I knew next to no Sorbs in Berlin. After I had lived here for one year, one of my good friends also*

[364] See also Chapters 3.1.3, 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.2 on Anita.

came and we moved in together. That's when I noticed that I had missed hearing Sorbian. As a result, it was very important to talk to my parents [who live in Croswitz] on the telephone, or talk to some of my oldest friends. My best friend studies in Leipzig. It was vital to keep this up, or to write letters in Sorbian, and to read them[365] *[in the Sorbian language]. It was always sensational, and it made me happy. Through a friend of mine, I got to know SKI. I felt very comfortable there relatively quickly. It was a little like a second home or a bit of home, which you did not have here in Berlin because you were far away from home.*[366] (Interview with Anita, November 11, 2003, in Berlin)

As discussed in Chapter 3.1.3, Anita came from a Catholic Sorbian family and grew up in Croswitz where the Sorbian language pervades almost all spheres of life. Bilingualism (Sorbian and German) is nevertheless ingrained in her quotidian life. In Anita's case, she underwent a dynamic process of identity construction when she changed schools from Croswitz to Bautzen and to study at the university in Berlin. In Bautzen, being a Sorb, for Anita, was embedded within and reproduced by the double-layered experiences of ethnicization and othering located in the convergence of two vectors – villagers v.s. city-dwellers; A-class pupils v.s. B-class pupils. In Berlin, meanings of Sorbian-ness, once again, capture the focus of her identity construction. During Anita's early days in Berlin, the feeling of "something wrong" was coupled with elusiveness. She was not able to specify what kind of feeling it actually was until the reunion with one of her bosom friends. Then Anita finally realized that dearth of the space of communication in which the Sorbian language plays a predominant part made her envisage an experience of loss. The field of communication, to which Anita felt very close since her childhood, was fragmented. At this point, Anita went through "identity loss" because of "missing familiar communication with 'one's own world'"[367] (Greverus 1972: 385). This is also to suggest that Anita experiences a crisis of identity because she becomes fully aware of fundamental social and cultural dissonance with social environment (Kaschuba 1999: 136). Anita's sense of dissonance with the surroundings in which she is located in Berlin is codified through the disruption of the social and cultural world that she has been used to. The world, mainly composed of the Sorbian language and people (her parents and long-time friends) with whom she can speak Sorbian, has been always coherent and settled for Anita, but it later becomes displaced by the experience of uncertainty when she goes to study in Berlin. The case of Anita's construction of Sorbian identity in this study, which includes her school life

[365] See Chapter 4.4.1.1 for a discussion on the articulation of Anita's sense of connection to Lusatia through the reading Sorbian newspaper *Serbske Nowiny*.

[366] Cf. Als ich angefangen habe zu studieren, mir etwas fehlt; und es hat eine Zeit lang gedauert, bis ich wusste, und es war einfach wirklich diese sorbische Umgebung, also das hat gefehlt, weil wo ich angefangen habe, war so gut wie keiner, den ich kannte von Sorben hier in Berlin. Das war dann halt erst, wo ich ein Jahr hier gelebt habe, kam dann eine gute Freundin von mir, wir sind dann zusammengezogen. Und dann erst habe ich bemerkt, dass mir das gefehlt hat, dieses Sorbische zu hören, dadurch waren auch Telefongespräch mit meinen Eltern sehr, sehr wichtig oder mit guten alten Freunden, meine beste Freundin studiert in Leipzig; es war wichtig, das zu halten oder sorbische Briefe zu schreiben und dann auch zu lesen, es war immer spektakulär, da hat man sich gefreut. Und dadurch, dass mir durch einen Freund SKI bekannt geworden ist, habe ich mich da relative schnell aufgehoben gefühlt, also das war so ein zweites Stück Heimat, was du ja hier in Berlin nicht hattest, dadurch dass du Halt weg von der Heimat warst.

[367] Cf. Die Komponente des Identitätsverlusts durch den Fehlen der vertrauten Kommunikation mit der "Eigenwelt".

in Bautzen (see Chapter 3.1.3) and university life in Berlin, bespeaks an on-going process in which she continually forges her new identities and takes up new positions in changing social circumstances. The meaning of Sorbian identity, variously charted in different constellations in which Anita stands in relations to a "constitutive outside" (Hall 1996) and to the Other, differs every single time. As Anita's case illustrates, there is no absolute form of Sorbian identity within one individual. The same goes for Anita's understanding of the concept of homeland. As seen in her later description, through *SKI*, her feeling of being at home is rearticulated. Before turning to the discussion of Anita's construction of homeland through *SKI*, a description of *SKI* is in order.

In May 1990, Merka Meschgang, her brothers and some of her friends founded *SKI* together in Berlin. According to an interview in the newspaper *Tagesspiegel Berlin* from March 31, 1994, Meschgang, who then majored in horticultural at Humboldt University in Berlin and commuted between Berlin, Bautzen or her parent village Radibor, intended to provide a space for the traditions, culture and language of her small community in Berlin (quoted in Tschernokoshewa 2004: 236) by establishing this association. Besides the promotion and presentation of the Sorbian culture in the metropolis, the advancement of Sorbian-German relations and the interaction and exchange between Sorbian and other nationalities (e.g. Czech people) in Berlin are also the central goals of *SKI* (http: // www.ski-berlin.de accessed April 14, 2008). Moreover, *SKI* aims to rouse and consolidate the community spirit of the Sorbs who live in and outside the capital. *SKI* is a registered society. Since 1993, *SKI* was an associated member of *Domowina*, and then it became a full member of *Domowina*. Financially, *SKI* receives aid from the European Commission, the Senate of Berlin (der Senat von Berlin), The Foundation for the Sorbian People and *Domowina* (ibid.). At *SKI*, activities, lectures, readings, exhibitions, Upper and Lower Sorbian language courses, film showings, music concerts, and photo exhibitions were held until Meschgang's resignation from *SKI* in 2001 (interview with Anita, November 11, 2003, in Berlin). Since 2002, *SKI* has been restructured (ibid.). Today, *SKI* endeavors to attract Berliners' attention to the interests of the Sorbian people. Among others, language courses in the Upper and Lower Sorbian languages are still on offer to the public. Additionally, lectures on themes relating to the Sorbs are given. Cooperation with and support from various institutions contribute to the understandings of the projects and programs in *SKI* (http: // www.ski-berlin.de accessed April 14, 2008). One further focus of *SKI* activities is cooperation with the cultural organizations of the other ethnic and social groups (ibid.).

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, Anita who was involved in the organizational committee of the *SKI* told me that the members of the *SKI* meet once every month. During these meetings, besides singing Sorbian songs, they engage in Sorbian-ness by consuming certain foods and drinks. As Anita put it,

> *In SKI, we take care that we have Sorbian beer, the Sorbian Wedding Beer*[368]*. People love to drink it. When we hold events in SKI, we also have typical Sorbian dishes, which is*

[368] Sorbian Wedding Beer was offered to us at the farewell party of the Summer School for Sorbian Language and Culture. But interestingly, my Sorbian teacher told me that she has never drunk Sorbian Wedding Beer when she saw it distributed on the table. For her, it is a mere expression of commercialization (fieldwork note, July 31, 2002).

probably a kind of attachment to Sorbian-ness, which we then intensify [by having Sorbian food and drinks] more than usual.[369] (Interview with Anita, November 11, 2003, in Berlin)

For Anita, *SKI* thus offers a bit of home in Berlin. As she noted earlier, there is actually no homeland in Berlin because she is far away from it. The homeland, in this context, refers to Croswitz where she was born and brought up. However, Anita feels that she is at home again (although she calls it a bit of home, or second home) because of the Sorbian surroundings embedded in the activities, events, gatherings, food and drinks organized by *SKI*. At this point, the homeland that Anita signifies is transformed into something relating to the Sorbs. In a word, Anita's notion of homeland mutates from being territory-related to a sense of connection with a social and cultural world that she is familiar with. It is no longer wedded to location, but is rather associated with experiences which Anita gains by interacting with other Sorbs who also live in the capital. *SKI* acts as a medium through which Anita can communicate with people not only in the language which affords her intimacy, but also through food and drinks that link her with Sorbian-ness. Taking it a step further, *SKI* reenacts Anita's sense of homeland – interaction and relationships with her ethnic peers in Berlin.

5.2.2 *Sorbentreff* in Dresden

As stated earlier, a deeply rooted view of coupling Lusatia with the Sorbs prevails in the Sorbian discourse. Such thinking is also a general understanding of ethnic identity in the Sorbian context as pertinently exemplified by Venessa's standpoint (discussed in Chapter 3.2.4), which is filled with the rhetoric of the territorialization of ethnic identity. It espouses that Lusatia is seen as the only homeland of the Sorbs, and the Sorbs only feel at home in Lusatia. However, the fact that there are Sorbs who live in Berlin and in Dresden, in a way, contradicts the above idea. In my view, the organization and gathering of the Sorbs who live in these two cities already takes on the connotation of a sense of homeland. As Mathilde told me, "*you come into contact with many people here [in Dresden]. You do not feel lonely*"[370] (interview with Mathilde, September 29, 2003, in Dresden). According to Mathilde, there are many Sorbs in Dresden. To name a few examples: When Mathilde began her life in Dresden, one elderly woman came to her and told her about the "*Sorbentreff*" (Meeting of the Sorbs). Accidentally, Mathilde found that the older woman's husband, who is also a Sorb, was the headmaster of the school where Mathilde had taught since 1962. One family living next to Mathilde's garden hails from her neighboring village in Upper Lusatia. In Mathilde's Catholic congregation in Dresden, there are also many Sorbs, most of whom stayed in Dresden after their university years. The children of one Sorbian family always greeted Mathilde in the Sorbian language when they saw her at school. One day when Mathilde talked to one of her friends in Sorbian at a bus stop, one woman came to them and said, "was it Sorbian that you just spoke to each other? Did you talk to each other in Sorbian?"

[369] Cf. [...] dass wir aber hier im SKI sehr darauf achten, dass wir sorbisches Bier haben, das "Sorbische Hochzeitsbier", das wird sehr sehr gern getrunken. Und dass wir auch, wenn wir im SKI Veranstaltung haben, darauf achten, dass wir typische sorbische Gerichte haben, was wahrscheinlich auch so eine Art Verbundenheit ist zum Sorbischen, um das dann mehr zu forcieren als normalerweise.
[370] Cf. Man hat viele Kontakt hier [in Dresden], man fühlt sich nicht einsam.

Through the organization of *Domowina*, the Sorbs who live in Dresden gather as a group and meet each other at least four times every year (March, June, September and December). All my informants who live in Dresden (Helga, Mathilde, Frauke, Birgit and Martina) mentioned to me that they attend these meetings. According to them, they usually take place in a church in Pieschen, a district of Dresden. Ecumenical prayers constitute one of the main activities in the meetings because most of the participants are Catholic, while some are Protestants. Therefore, either a Catholic priest or a pastor from a Protestant church is invited to conduct the prayers for them. Afterwards, the participants go to the café owned by a Sorbian Catholic couple and they discuss there.

I myself attended the *Sorbentreff* on March 17, 2007. Helga who organizes the meeting nicely invited me to take part in this quarterly meeting and to decorate Easter eggs with her and her friends (Helga's letter to me on February 27, 2007). It was Saturday afternoon. The meeting was to begin at three o'clock in St. Michael's (Caritas elderly care home in Friedrichstadt, a district of Dresden). I, as a first-timer, arrived at the meeting place at half past two. I did not see any directing sign, so I asked one woman if she knew in which room *Sorbentreff* was going to be held. She told me that I should go to an older man who takes care of the elderly care home and is also a priest. Then I went to him and he ushered me into a conference room for *Sorbentreff*. At this time, still nobody came, and the old man and I thus had a little time to have a talk. "*You are not Sorb*," said he to me, adding that he thought I had perhaps married a Sorb. I explained to him that I am writing on the Sorbs for my doctoral thesis. The arriving people soon interrupted our talk. Helga came accompanied by a researcher from the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, with whom I had had several talks before. Shortly after we greeted each other, Mathilde, Frauke and some other people whom I do not know also arrived gradually. We started to arrange the tables and the chairs, set up tables with coffee cups, cake dishes, cakes, gateau and homemade bread made by some participants. Then all of us were asked to enter the chapel, located in the care home. The younger priest from Bautzen greeted each of us and shook hands with everybody at the entry to the chapel. Next to the entry, Sorbian ecclesiastical hymnbooks were at people's disposal. I saw everyone took one with him or her, but I did not. I did not know that I should take one as everybody did. Mathilde reminded me that I should take one for singing. After I got a hymnbook, the old priest with whom I talked on my arrival announced a number in the Sorbian language. Then he said this number again in German, and added benignly "this is for the Taiwanese woman". I turned to smile at him thankfully. I thought the number he just said was the page number. I was wrong. Mathilde who sat by me told me it was the number of the song.

After singing, the younger priest showed us two religious slides. He handed paper and pens to all of us and asked everybody to write his or her idea on the slides. Shortly after the ecumenical prayer, the priest from Bautzen showed us around the graveyard just next to the care home. I walked with Mathilde to the graveyard and she told me that several Sorbs were buried there and people can recognize their Sorbian origin by the inscription on the tombstone. On our way back to the conference room, I struck up a conversation with a young mother. She had three little children with her. Before I knew her, Mathilde had already told me about her persistent attitude toward her children's speaking Sorbian. However, the presence of this young mother would have attracted my attention even if Mathilde had not said anything to me about her. It was hard to ignore

her as she was the only young woman (besides myself) among all the participants. She told me she originally comes from Panschwitz and she had moved to Dresden to go to the university. In her everyday family life, she tries to speak Sorbian with her children. However, it is not easy. Sometimes her children talk to her in German, she replies to them also in German. Just shortly afterwards, she noticed that she was speaking German. Then she changed languages to speak Sorbian to her children. She said she intends to move to Croswitz, where her children can be more immersed in a Sorbian environment.

After that, everybody gathered again in the conference room. It was time for announcement, and of course also for coffee and cake. At first, one woman made a short speech on the *Bleiberecht* (right to stay) humanistic campaign for those seeking political asylum in Saxony. Then she passed around a paper to the audience for collecting signatures in order to support this campaign. The second activity was conducted by the Sorbian linguist who works in the Sorbian Institute, Bautzen. She first gave us a short lesson on ancient Sorbian words and then explained to us the meaning of some words in the song texts by singing songs from the hymnbook *Gesellschaftliche Gesangbuch* published by *Domowina* in 1980. Since most of the songs were written in the 19th century, some words are not familiar. After "learning by singing", Helga took the chair. She first passed each of us the schedule of meetings in 2007. In addition to this gathering, there were to be three other ecumenical prayers held in June, September and December. Furthermore, one mass for the deceased was going to take place in November. Additionally, a casual meeting at the garden of one family was planned in July. Moreover, they planned to go on an outing in Upper Lusatia (Radibor, Sdier, Klix and Spreewiese) in August. After Helga acquainted everyone with the plan of activities, she nicely asked me to introduce myself to everyone. The meeting ended with questions about my dissertation, including why I chose women as the subject for my research and why the Sorbs living in cities are included in my study.

Sorbentreff in Dresden, as Mathilde put it, was originally organized by *Domowina*. Activities as such are redolent of *Domowina*'s other arrangement, e.g. dorms for the Sorbian university students in Leipzig or in Dresden (discussed in Chapter 3.2.5). One of the main objects is to consolidate the Sorbs who live outside of Lusatia. As already analyzed in the earlier chapter, *Domowina*'s endeavors in this respect reveal the attempt of "identity management" (Greverus 1981). Much the same can be said about *Sorbentreff* in Dresden and *SKI* in Berlin. As I have already laid bare the concept of "identity management" in Chapter 3.2.5, the point of discussion here is what *Sorbentreff* means to those women studied here respectively. This will be accompanied by some of my observations and thoughts.

As noted earlier, Helga takes charge of the organizational affairs of the *Sorbentreff*. She has a considerable number of index cards with names and addresses of the Sorbs in Dresden. For her, these meetings are ensconced in part of her quotidian life, among others, in terms of friendship and activities (see Chapter 4.3.2). In addition to *Sorbentreff*, Helga also organizes some other activities for her ethnic peers, such as the decoration of Easter eggs during Easter time. As an example, in 2007 she invited her Sorbian- and German-speaking friends to decorate Easter eggs with her for 21 days. Helga's devotion to the arrangement of the activities and events for the Sorbs in Dresden is motivated by her accentuation on the cohesion of the Sorbs. As she stated,

"*the rest of the Sorbs have to hold together a little bit despite their different views on life*"[371] (interview with Helga, October 6, 2003, in Dresden). Helga's view succinctly elucidates one of the most emphatic points in the Sorbian discourse – cohesion. "Keeping all the Sorbs together" (see also Chapter 3.2.5) reveals rhetoric of survival of the Sorbs that is deployed as a strategy to bulwark the permeance of German assimilation. Simultaneously, the logic of cohesion implies the doctrine of uniting the Sorbs as a whole. However, in my view, reading the *Sorbentreff* and other related activities held in Dresden simply in the light of cohesion courts the danger of overlooking individual agency. Other informants' perspectives on these activities yield insights into decoding the meanings in the process of constructing their identities. For instance, in Mathilde's eyes, attending *Sorbentreff*, meeting other Sorbs in Dresden frequently, and speaking Sorbian with other participants gives her a sense of connection with her "homeland" – an environment where she is not a stranger. In the case of Martina, *Sorbentreff* opens up a new possibility for speaking the Sorbian language in Dresden (interview with Martina, September 9, 2003, in Dresden). At the same time, it is also the only occasion for her to have contact with the Sorbs in Dresden; otherwise, she does not have any direct contact with them.

Seen from Mathilde and Martina's points of view of *Sorbentreff*, a sense of "hominess" pervades. At *Sorbentreff*, according to my observation, a distinct sense of "home" is created that leads the participant to make a "homeward" journey through religion (ecumenical prayers), language (a Sorbian field of communication and Sorbian learning) and music (singing Sorbian songs). The activities at *Sorbentreff* are closely aligned with these three elements, which constitute the very core of Sorbian-ness as repeatedly emphasized in the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects and in the Sorbian cultural discourse where women are assigned the role of national promoters of the existence of the Sorbian people (see Chapters 2.2 and 2.4). Such activities at the meetings can therefore be assumed to harbor a certain conventional, gender-specific tone of "Sorbian-ness". Nevertheless, for my informants, the above three components conjure up feelings of "home", which also reveals how they actively attribute meaning to "Sorbian-ness" by making references to these elements when they meet their ethnic peers in such a gathering. For me, the point at issue is why they consider participating in such activities to be connected with the "homeland" (*Heimat*).

The "homeland" created in *Sorbentreff* and other activities or meetings among the Sorbs of Dresden has actually shifted from the concrete place – Lusatia – to a sense of social-cultural connection in which a space of identity comes into being. In this sense, Sorbentreff and other related activities symbolize the "homeland" for the Sorbs who live in Dresden. In this space, the binding value shared by fellow Sorbs and the comprehensible symbols among all the members are on offer. Their ethnic identity is constructed in this space; as Herman Bausinger put it, "identity is directly able to be experienced: as individual's feeling of reconcilement with himself or herself and his or her surroundings"[372] (Bausinger 1993 [1978]: 204).

[371] Cf. Der Rest der Sorben muss schon ein bisschen zusammenhalten, trotz unterschiedlicher Ansichten über das Leben.
[372] Cf. Identität ist direkt erfahrbar, als Gefühl der Übereinstimmung des Individuums mit sich selbst und seiner Umgebung.

5.2.3 Some Concluding Remarks on *SKI* in Berlin and *Sorbentreff* in Dresden

In the preceding, I have illustrated *SKI* in Berlin and *Sorbentreff* in Dresden and what these "homey" activities mean to the each woman studied here. These group gatherings yield a locus for understanding how those under study here construct their identities. Among other things, a sense of "homeland" notably undergoes reproduction in the process of identity construction. As seen from the activities held in the above two forms of "homeland" social organizations, Sorbian belongings are generated through language, music, and religion. These three elements provide the participants with a feeling of "homeland" and connect them with their "homeland". In this regard, "homeland" is not fixed in a place, but rather is transformed into a "feeling". Following Avtar Brah, Munich-based ethnologist Alois Moosmüller clarifies that "homeland" is not a place, but a feeling; to be precise, it is not a simple, clear-cut feeling, but a contradictory one that calls itself into question (2002: 16f.). In Brah's view, the diasporic feeling does not consist of "desire for a homeland", but rather "homing desire" (1996: 197). Anita's feeling of a "lack of something", as explored earlier, is a pertinent example that addresses the phenomena of a "homing desire". Moosmüller identifies this feeling of "homing desire" as something that you hardly can name (2002: 21). This point recalls Anita's feeling of something being wrong, a feeling fraught with elusiveness, as mentioned previously.

A "homing desire" looks for similarity, for everything that is viewed similar to one's own feelings, wishes, habits, imagination, preferences and the like. At first, "homing desire" seems to be satisfied by looking for similar "stuff" that is self-related, for example objects, places, situations, gazes, pictures, smells, feelings, and so on. However, as Moosmüller further points out, searching for such a "homeland" rarely allows this "stuff" or content to satisfy the "homing desire". Instead, a social situation must be produced (Moosmüller 2002: 17). A social situation enables similarity through cooperation, in meetings, in friendship, in intimacy, in living and in experiencing, in order to realize existential needs for interpersonal understanding and closeness. In this regard, communication with other people satisfies the "homing desire". Anita's talking with her parents and her friends by telephone and her attending *SKI*, or Helga's and other informants' participating in *Sorbentreff*, or their friendship and the undertaking of activities with other Sorbs in Dresden all exemplify the above analysis on the "homing desire".

In the process of interacting with their ethnic peers, "homeland" is reproduced through the creation of social situations. "Doing" inhabits in this creation. In this sense, "homeland", by "doing", again, separates itself from the realm of place and is rather an ability or capability to create. Ina-Maria Greverus' concept of homeland (1972, 1979) facilitates our understanding of this point. In her *Der Territoriale Mensch. Ein literaturanthropologischer Versuch zum Heimatphänomen* (The Territorial Human. A Literary Anthropological Study of the Phenomenon of Homeland) (1972), Greverus takes literary anthropology as an approach to define "territorial human" by analyzing homeland-related literary works. It was first premised that the "territorial human" finds his/her identity in a territory, which ensures his/her behavior assurance. In this territory,

environment as "life world" become his/her "own world".[373] In her *Auf der Suche nach Heimat* (In Search of Homeland) from 1979, Greverus further elaborates on her conceptualization of homeland by drawing on her discussion in the above book from 1972. For her, an ethnological definition of territory (*Territorium*) as a space of behaviors of possession and defense supports the inquiry into a necessary space for humans, where their needs for identity, safety, activity and stimulation are satisfied (1979: 23). This question concerns why human beings "take possession of" space in the first place and make it their homeland, and whether so-called homelessness nowadays perhaps has less to do with people's loss of consciousness of history and tradition than the fact that people are barred from taking possession of and fashioning a certain space to make it a homeland (1972: 23). Borrowing from Robert Andrey (1966), Greverus understands such orientation toward a territory of satisfaction driven by intentional and existential needs, in which identification, protection and action are ensured, as "territorial imperative" (1979: 24). Greverus offers us two meanings for this term: On the one hand, it is an indispensable need for human beings as a species to behave according to space; on the other hand, the authorities who constantly provide new supplies and impose bans on humans also guarantee that human beings have their needs met *in* and *at* one space (1979: 24, emphasis Greverus'). She further associates her conceptualization of homeland with Günther Lange's Marxist notion of homeland (1973), which sees the active relationship of human beings with their environment (creation of homeland) as a generic feature and natural power (1979: 25f.). This relates to an ability and necessity which every human possesses: to creatively and productively acquire an environment (1979: 26). In this sense, Greverus identifies the concept of homeland as a construction of human's active relationship to the environment: to actively acquire, mould and furnish it – to make it homeland (1979: 28). In a word, active action takes center stage in the construction of homeland. The prerequisite lies in the fact that agents regard their environement as the one which they value and the one with significance. Moreover, it is action-taking that renders the significance visible. For those women studied here, who live in Berlin and Dresden, "homeland" is embodied in their active furnishing of social organizations and in their construction of social situations.

Finally, it is important to note that Lusatia is not the only homeland here; the cities these women live provide those studied in Dresden and in Berlin with a ground of belonging. The establishment of and participation in the Sorbian organizations in their residential cities is a way to affirm their Sorbian identity inhabited in Lusatia and is also an expression of their connection with the place they call home. At the same time, an imagined Sorbian community is constructed in the reenactment and reprocessing of traditions and cultures, such as the decoration of Easter eggs at Helga's. This connects the Sorbs in Dresden and their ethnic peers in Lusatia. However, their "lived experience of a locality" (Brah 1996: 192) in Berlin and in Dresden, in the meantime, also makes them "feel at home". This experience of being aware of two homes differentiates them from the Sorbs who see Lusatia as the only home. The connotation that home carries is then understood differently within the Sorbs. An internal difference opens up at this point. For instance, Ina and Franziska, who participate in *SKI* as Anita does, feel at

[373] See also Chapter 2.1.3.

home in Berlin. As discussed in the previous chapter, Ina who has lived in the capital since going to college there sees herself also as a Berliner (see Chapter 5.1.2.1). Franziska who has lived there since 1991 also told me that

> *I have become accustomed to Berlin, it is also my home. When I am at my parents', it is also my home. There I have my childhood and family, but through these 12 years that I have been here, Berlin has become very important to me*.[374] (Interview with Franziska, November 14, 2003, in Berlin)

As noted above, "feeling at home" outside Lusatia, which implies a renewed contestation over the meaning of "homeland" in the widespread Sorbian discourse. Taking it a step further, this also challenges the idea of a continuous and homogenous Sorbian identity as fixed in the conventional understanding of the Sorbian ethnicity. Homeland is constituted by a series of connections between social intimacy, interaction, relationships and the creative production of social situations. That is to say, in Sorbian culture, the Sorbs and Lusatia are not "naturally" converged into one unity. Moreover, a sense of mobility and transition is embedded in a sense of belonging to two homelands. When the Sorbs who live in Berlin commute between Lusatia and their other home in Berlin or in Dresden, their awareness of life changes in this transitory process. For instance, in Anita's eyes,

> *Berlin is more the place for me, it's where I work and live. Because I work here, Croswitz or Lusatia is rather a place for me to rest, where I can refrain from thinking about all those things, like work in the hospital or courses at the university, where I can just lean back and I am just there without doing anything special*.[375] (Interview with Anita, November 11, 2003, in Berlin)

Identity construction of the participants in *SKI* and *Sorbentreff* is not caught up in a single dimension fraught with Sorbian-ness, but is rather connected with other groups of people, such as asylum-seekers in Saxony. This is the moment that the Sorbs in *Sorbentreff* attach themselves to another community that is searching for a home far away from their prior home elsewhere. In the same vein, the fact that *SKI* in Berlin maintains connections with groups of other nationalities, such as Czech speakers in Berlin engenders an intersection between the Sorbs and other groups of people. For instance, the common experiences of being Slavs may configure them as *one* group, while the differences of lifestyles in the metropolis may have different trajectories in their life experiences. Through these interconnections, the Sorbs who live in Dresden and in Berlin position and reposition themselves in complex arrays of similarities and differences which are understood in a relational positioning between themselves and the

[374] Cf. [...] dass ich mich auch an Berlin gewöhnt habe, das es auch mein zuhause ist. Und wenn ich bei meiner Eltern bin, das ist auch mein zuhause, aber das ist jetzt eben so, die Kindheit und die Familie ist da, aber jetzt durch diese 12 Jahre, die ich hier bin, es ist eben für mich schon auch sehr wichtig geworden.

[375] Cf. [...] Berlin eher der Ort für mich, wo ich arbeite und lebe, dadurch dass ich hier arbeite, und Croswitz oder Lausitz eher für mich der Ruhepol ist, wo ich Abstand zu diesen ganzen Sache bekommen, ob das nun wirklich die Arbeit im Krankenhaus ist oder ob das das Studium ist, wo ich einfach mich zurücklehnen kann und einfach nur da bin, ohne ich großartig was ich machen.

Sorbs living in Lusatia as well as people of other communities. The attitude toward life of those studied who live in Berlin and in Dresden breaks a new ground in understanding Sorbian culture and Sorbian identity, as they are not homogenized in the essentialist thinking of culture and identity, but rather they are lived experiences constituted as a variety of possibilities that are constantly apt to change and a reliance on personal biographies.

5.3 Thinking Identities in the Play of Difference

> Identity is a narrative of the self; it's the story we tell about the self in order to know who we are. We impose a structure on it. The most important effect of this reconceptualization of identity is the surreptitious return of difference. Identity is a game that ought to be played against difference. But now we have to think about identity *in relation to* difference. (Hall1996: 346, emphasis Hall's)

Hall's elucidation of the concept of identity above unlocks mutually operative meanings associated with identity and difference. The point of identity is never homogeneity and closure, but is rather the positionings and repositionings in relation to difference. That is to say, difference is inscribed on our identities. Hall's understanding of difference affords us grounds to capture the sense of difference. He employs the word "play" as a metaphor in this constellation of identity and difference, uncovering a double meaning: 1) "the instability, the permanent unsettlement, the lack of any final resolution"; 2) cultural "play", such as a "playing" within varieties of Caribbean music, which cannot be represented in fixed oppositional dichotomies because its complexity reflects the re-sited-ness of boundaries contingent on different places, times, and different questions (Hall 1990: 228). As implied in Hall's view, any homogenous and essentialist claims of culture's inherent authenticity are deconstructed. Following this point of view, individuals, acting as agents, construct their identities from a multi-variable code of possible subject positions (see Ha 1999: 68). Their identities are therefore not only in flux and are constantly undergoing a process of dissolving, crossing and renewal, but they are also simultaneously stretched across a variety of differences – ethnic, gender, and cultural.

In this section, I will analyze how difference is inscribed on identity and how identity becomes marked by difference. I will examine three examples in which many meanings of difference will be explored in different discourses. The first case study, Helga's experience in her workplace and her experience of discrimination during her childhood, will bring to light how difference is transformed from the logic of binarism to articulate the enhancement of marginality. The second example is illustrated by Lydia's movement across ethnic boundaries where meanings of difference are produced through a process of deferral and sliding in terms of her ethnic identities. These first two case studies rely on single life experience of those studied, however, they open up the window to understand other individuals of the group in question. Finally, I will focus on how the women in this study, as East German women, react to the "reproach" they experience from West German women in terms of questions of maternity and emancipation. This involves how gendered experiences differ between former West and East Germany in cultural and political discourses. In cases where the women studied

react to accusations, gender difference reverberates as a redefining and repositioning of their identities as East German women.

5.3.1 Difference Transformed

As discussed in Chapter 3.1.2, Helga (born in 1935) experienced disgrace during her childhood because of a situation with the overseer of the feudal estate. As can be understood from her experience of discrimination, the overseer marked Helga's difference by disdainfully comparing her to a dog-keeper. Helga's experience as such was produced and reproduced by a logic of classification that creates an order and purity rooted in the extreme nationalist and racialist discourse of National Socialism. Helga's inobservance of the overseer's demand transgressed the order that the overseer created, and she was therefore categorized as an Other by associating her with animals. Simply put, Helga's difference is constructed in a relation to social order. It is notable, however, that social order is produced and maintained through spotlighting difference. According to Mary Douglas, who studies the ideas of order based on the notion of purity as opposed to pollution, the overseer's degrading of Helga can be decoded as the embodiment of the following:

> Ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, for and against that a semblance of order is created. (Douglas 1984: 4)

Seen in this light, difference is constructed in a binary opposition. In the confrontation with the overseer, Helga was forcedly fixed in an impervious boundary when she was excluded as an outsider. Difference, as was the case with Helga's experience of discrimination, is negatively construed as the exclusion and marginalization of those who are defined as the Other, or as outsiders (Woodward 1997: 35). This concept of difference is employed as a static dichotomy in which significance of being German or not (e.g. Sorb) is reproduced through symbolizing the Other as an animal. However, to agree with Hall, the sense of difference is not pure "Otherness" (1990: 229). Helga's experience in the research institute where she worked for 40 years challenges this notion of difference through the aspect of an "Otherness" which is exercised in a binary opposition. In other words, another meaning of difference will be uncovered in the following.

Before discussing difference in a new context, an introduction of Helga's experience at her working place is in order. After the Reunification of Germany, one lawyer came to the institute to help with some legal affairs, such as drawing up a bi-lateral contract for cooperation with a Czech institute. Helga herself had worked out this contract before the Reunification, and she had noted what special information ought to be included in this contract. Furthermore, Helga added the sentence at the end of the contract: "*This contract is drawn up in Czech and German, and both forms of the contract are of equal value*"[376] (interview with Helga, October 6, 2003, in Dresden).

[376] Cf. Dieser Vertrag, dieser in Tschechisch und Deutsch ausgefertigt und beide Vertragsformen sind gleichwertig.

She then gave this contract to the lawyer. After several days, the lawyer asked to talk to Helga and told her that the contract should be written in a more legal language. However, this was not all. The lawyer added that "*the last sentence can't be left in because our new institute director cannot speak Czech. I suggest that the contract be written in German and English*"[377] (ibid.). To this, Helga replied, "*Why would you do that? Either the contract should be both in German and Czech, or it should be only in English*"[378] (ibid.). The lawyer further said, "*But that's how it's always been: the weaker one must bow down to the will of the stronger one*" [379] (ibid.). Helga absolutely disagreed with such an opinion fraught with intolerance, but for the lawyer, "*it was somehow all a matter of course*"[380] (ibid.). With discontent, Helga disputed against the lawyer:

> *I don't see it that way at all. We are equal parties to the contract, whether our country happens to have more money than the other. What our colleagues in the Czech institute contribute could be much superior to what we contribute here.*[381] (Ibid.)

In the end, the director of the institute took Helga's version of the contract, the one in both German and Czech. Regarding this, Helga explained that perhaps the director had a different point of view than the lawyer.

For Helga, the lawyer's reaction reflects a particular value judgment that may be quite natural to him and still circulates in many peoples' minds. The above example is not a singular experience at her workplace that happened to Helga. Another example took place in 1981. In Poland, there was a conflict which began with a strike in 1979, and then the free trade union *Solidarnosz* (Solidarity), which was founded in 1980, initiated a Poland-wide strike against the government. This strike also foretold the collapse of communism. Because of this conflict in 1981, the Polish government arrested the leader of *Solidarnosz*, Lech Walesa. It also outlawed *Solidarnosz*, declared state of emergency, and the Head of State Jaruzelski imposed martial law. East German citizens were not allowed to go to Poland, and vice versa.

> *One day, the director of our institute gathered us because of the conflict, and he talked about the situation in such a derogatory way! Before, Poland had been an equal partner within this socialist system, but now he put Poland down in such a way. He seemed a hair away from saying the word "Polack". The whole experience was so unpleasant.*[382] (Ibid.)

Such an unpleasant experience made Helga "*recall that example with the overseer on*

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[377] Cf. Dieser letzte Satz, der geht auf keinen Fall, denn unser Institutsdirektor, der neue, der kann ja nicht Tschechisch, also ich schlag vor, der Vertragstext wird in Deutsch und Englisch ausgeführt.
[378] Cf. Wieso denn das? Entweder in Deutsch und Tschechisch, oder nur in Englisch.
[379] Cf. Ja. Es war schon immer so, dass der Schwäche den Stärkeren beugen muss.
[380] Cf. Das war für ihn irgendwie völlig selbstverständlich.
[381] Cf. Das leuchtet mir auf keinen Fall ein, denn wir sind gleichberechtigte Vertragspartner, ob nun unser Land im Hintergrund mehr Geld hat als das andere, das was die Mitarbeiter von dem tschechischen Institut beitragen könnten, kann durchaus viel höherwertig sein, das, was wir hier beitragen.
[382] Cf. Eines Tages, in diesem Zusammenhang versammelte uns unser Chef im Institut und hat also nun über diese Situation geredet in eine so abfälligen Art! Vorher waren die Polen also gleichberechtigte Partner innerhalb dieses sozialistischen Systems und der hat die so madig gemacht, dass eigentlich nur noch was gefehlt hätte, das er Polacken gesagt hätte [...]. Also das hatte mich so, so unangenehm berührt.

the feudal estate who remarked about keeping dogs to me"[383] (ibid.). In this point, the power of memory has exerted a lasting and negative impact on Helga's interpretation of this occurrence at her workplace. For Helga, "*the way he [the director] described everything made them [the Poles] seem like they were an inferior people anyway*"[384] (ibid.), which is exactly what made her recollect her experience of being discriminated against by the overseer when she was a child in the early 40s. This process of remembering, ostensibly based on the memories of the past, actually involves a construction of the present, as "memory is a current product of mental processes combined with now perceived or felt behavioral necessities"[385] (Schmidt 1991: 386). This unpleasant experience also makes Helga think about why people are intolerantly biased against other people. Helga is critical of such situations and contends that learning other languages is the key to understanding others and to encouraging people to not make such derisive remarks about others.As Helga said:

> *Germany borders on many countries. People who live on a border should at least be able to somewhat speak the language of the on the other side of the border. It is my belief that it would be a great advantage because if people can speak another person's language, maybe they could put themselves in anothers' position much better, and then people will be more tolerant of others.*[386] (Ibid.)

However, according to Helga's observation, based on her experiences as illustrated above, people are intolerant of others. Moreover, "*this intolerance often begins as something wholly unconscious*"[387] (ibid.). Helga was shocked at how people reacted to some basic things as demonstrated in these two examples. Furthermore, Helga sees the *DDR*'s promotion of friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as merely hot air. People did not really have a friendly attitude toward others. Helga's idea of understanding others through language comprehension has been inspired, first and foremost, through her positive experience with bilingualism, with Sorbian and German. Helga considers Sorbian to be her mother tongue, while she also speaks German as a native language. The salutary influence of her bilingual proficiency is most felt in her career life, among others things:

> *I certainly encountered people from Eastern countries particularly very often. At school, we had very good Russian courses because the Slavonic languages are more similar than German and English, for instance. Therefore, I was always able to talk to people I met. My German colleagues were a little envious of me.*[388] (Ibid.)

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[383] Cf. Das fiel mir, nämlich dieses Beispiel mit diesem Aufseher auf diesem Rittergut, der zu mir sagte, Hund halten.
[384] Cf. Also er hat das so dargestellt, als waren das sowieso minderwertige Leute.
[385] Cf. Erinnern ist aktuelle Sinnproduktion im Zusammenhang jetzt wahrgenommener oder empfundener Handlungsnotwendigkeiten.
[386] Cf. Deutschland hat so viele Grenzen mit anderen Länder, es sollten wenigstens die Leute in den Grenzregionen, die angrenzende Sprache einigermaßen können. Es wäre, glaube ich, ein große Vorteil, denn wenn man die Sprache eines anderen kann, kann man sich auch wahrscheinlich viele besser in seine Situation hineindenken, und man wird ihm gegenüber vielleicht toleranter.
[387] Cf. Diese Intoleranz, die beginnt oft schon völlig unbewusst.
[388] Cf. In meinen beruflichen Leben, bin ich natürlich auch sehr oft gerade mit den Leuten aus östlichen Ländern in Berührung gekommen. Wir haben, also in der Schule, ziemlich guten Russischunterricht

As seen in the above two examples (the lawyer's comment about the contract; the director's remark about Poland), the difference associated with Otherness is intensified by a stereotyping of Others as strongly subordinated (e.g. "*the weaker must bow down to the will of the stronger*") and culturally primitive objects (e.g. the way the director talked about the Poles). Stereotyping as a representation practice, according to Hall (2003 [1997]), involves three aspects that show us how stereotyping works: 1) Stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes "difference" (Hall 2003: 258, referring to Richard Dyer 1977); 2) "stereotyping deploys a strategy of 'splitting'" from the normal to the abnormal and "symbolically fixes boundaries and excludes everything which does not belong" (ibid.); and 3) "stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power" (ibid.). The ways in which the Czechs and the Poles are stereotyped in the above examples is implicated in the intertwining of these three points. The third feature of stereotyping concerning the exercising of power is central to my analysis here. As illustrated in the lawyer's view in which he explicitly refers to the linear relationship between the predominant and the subordinate groups, as well as in the depreciatory way in which the director speaks of the Poles, the superior exercises power over the inferior. Power can be understood as physical coercion and economic exploitation. However, in my cases, power is rather conceived in cultural terms, for the powerful represent the powerless in a certain way: they mark, assign and classify others according to norms set up as normalcy and construct the racial/ethnic exclusion as Otherness (see Hall 2003[1997]: 259). In this sense, difference is fixed within the stereotypes imposed on the Czechs and the Poles.

Helga's argument against the lawyer, however, challenges, contests, and changes the representational practices of difference rooted in Otherness. In the process in which Helga confronts the lawyer, the meaning of "Czech" begins to slide and drift in new directions: of being of equal value with Germany. Helga's objective of the equality that the Czech language deserves reverses the negative representation of "Czech" produced through the discourse and images in the German nationalist projects. Taking it a step further, Helga's action of reverse engenders a change in the notion of difference. Difference becomes recognized, rather than limited in a crippling and stifling way of stereotyping. The recognition of difference enables us to reconsider the idea of difference because "difference no longer functions as a symbol of inequality, subordination and inferiority, but rather becomes a locus of political self-consciousness, speaking and self-authorization"[389] (Ha 1999: 197f.). Moreover, Helga's renunciation of this unequal and defiant dealing with other peoples not only decenters the dominant discourses and identities which have suppressed those dominated but also transforms the meaning of being marginalized. Her active, transformative and self-asserting responses split the discourse slanted with colonialism. This renders "hybridity" visible

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gehabt, weil die slawischen Sprache ähneln einander wesentlich mehr als z.B. das Deutsche und das Englische, so dass ich mich immer mit allen Leuten, mit denen ich zusammengekommen bin, auch unterhalten konnte, und meine deutsche Kollegen waren, also da doch schon ein bisschen neidisch, dass das so war.

[389] Cf. Die Anerkennung der Differenz ermöglicht einen fundamentalen Umwertungsprozeß, in dem die Differenz nicht mehr als Zeichen der Ungleichheit, Unterordnung und Minderwertigkeit fungiert, sondern zu einem Ort des politischen Selbstbewusstseins, des Sprechens und der Selbstermächtigung geworden ist.

in the process in which Helga constructs her identity. "Hybridity", as Indian-American postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha who currently teaches at Harvard University has elaborated in his analysis of (post)colonial discourse, is initially employed to expose the conflicts between the colonizers and the colonized (Bhabha 1990, 1994). Bhabha understands the term of hybridity as a process, in which the colonial authority attempts to translate the identity of Other (the colonized) within a homogenous category, but fails. This process, however, leads to something else and marks up differences. The interaction between the colonized and the colonizers does not proceed in a linear relationship between the rulers and the ruled. Rather, as Bhabha puts it,

> the colonial hybridity is not a problem of genealogy or identity between two different cultures which can then be resolved as an issue of cultural relativism. Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonial disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange its authority – its rules of recognition. (1994: 114)

Confronted with being Othered, Helga not only transforms the notion of difference, but also enhances the marginality where she is initially located with inferiority in the dominant discourse. Her bilingual proficiency as noted earlier is a pertinent example: A negative sense of difference petrified in the devaluation of the Sorbian language in the past is transformed into enrichment in understanding others and a means of communication with the speakers of the Slavonic languages. In sum, in the words of Vietnamese-German political scientist Kien Nghi Ha, whose research centers on postcolonial theory, migration studies, and racism and cultural studies, the marginality represented in a racial/ethnic difference is thus enhanced and accorded the power to enunciate itself as seen in the case of Helga:

> Opening of spaces for marginalized voices within the dominant culture is associated with social contest for cultural, sexual and social difference, in order to redeem an important condition for bringing out new forms of cultural identities and emergence of new subjects in the political arena. It is an attempt to critically make politics within the current discourse in a productive and creative way, in order to win an able-to-act position for the excluded group. The current discourse is therefore changed.[390] (Ha 1999: 117)

5.3.2 A Deferral of Self

Before completing her Abitur (secondary education degree) in a Lower Sorbian grammar school in Cottbus, Lydia, who was born in 1954 and grew up in a German Protestant family, lived in a town with place-name signs written both in German and in Sorbian. However, she personally had no contact with Sorbs. At school, Lydia started to

[390] Cf. Das Aufbrechen von Räumen für marginalisierte Stimmen innerhalb der dominanten Kultur ist mit einem gesellschaftlichen Kampf um kulturelle, sexuelle und soziale Differenz verbunden, um eine wichtige Bedingung für die Hervorbringung neuer Formen kultureller Identitäten und das Auftauchen neuer Subjekte in der politischen Arena einzulösen. Es ist ein Versuch kritisch Politik innerhalb der bestehenden Diskurse produktiv und kreativ einzubinden, um durch Repräsentation des Nicht-Repräsentierten handlungsfähige Position für ausgeschlossene Gruppen zu gewinnen, die die Diskurse als solche verändern.

learn Lower Sorbian. Lydia's love for the Sorbian language motivated her to become involved in the Sorbian theater starting in high school. She wrote about the Sorbian-German theater in her *Diplom* thesis. Her training in the *Němsko-Serbske ludowe dźiwadło Budyšin*/*Deutch-Sorbische Volkstheater Bautzen* (German-Sorbian National Theater) in Bautzen further reinforced her enthusiasm for Sorbian culture. Lydia's experiences at high school – having good Sorbian teachers, learning Sorbian, having the chance to appreciate the Sorbian cultures in villages, and working as a student trainee in the theater – formed her approach to connecting with the Sorbs. Moreover, she built up a German-speaking theater group with her Sorbian friends, with whom she studied at the University of Leipzig. She emphasized that the link of the Sorbian language and her later work in Sorbian theater plays are the main factors for her identification with the Sorbs. However, Lydia is outspoken about her uncertainty regarding her positioning in terms of ethnic belongingness because she knows that she is not Sorb in terms of birth. In her view, the very reason why she feels like a Sorb is her good command of both the Lower and Upper Sorbian languages. Her marriage to a Sorb also plays a part in the construction of her Sorbian identity. More accurately, however, it should be stated that Lydia perceives herself as both German and Sorb united: "*I really identified my family name with this theater, with the German and Sorbian, which my family name is. This was unity for me*"[391] (interview with Lydia, October 3, 2003, in Bautzen).

In Lydia's case, her family is an arena where not only three cultures – German, Sorbian and Polish (her mother-in-law came from Poland and currently lives with Lydia and her husband) – are practiced, but also where two faiths – Catholic and Protestant – intersect. In addition, a variety of positions and points of view emerge and interact with each other in the process of her everyday communication. In her family, her husband consistently speaks with their children in Sorbian, with his mother speaks Polish and Sorbian. Lydia speaks with her husband and children in German. For example, all three languages are spoken and interchanged at the dining table, depending on who speaks with whom. When they say grace before meals, we find this triligualism:

> *Before eating, we always say grace in Sorbian, and then we take each others by the hands and say a grace in Polish. And if we have German(-speaking) guests, we add 'enjoy your meal' in German afterwards. […] The grace is in Sorbian, which means I say it in Sorbian, but I do not cross myself.*[392] (Interview with Lydia, October 3, 2003, in Bautzen)

In addition to this example of triligualism, Lydia also situates herself depending on with whom she is talking and what she is talking about. This situated-ness is especially evident in conversations about politics or history. For Lydia, such issues usually involve an emotional reaction, and especially nationality is considered as a point of departure for defending one's position. Lydia cited one typical scene of everyday conversation between her husband and her as an example:

[391] Cf. Ich habe mich dann also wirklich bis in meinen Familiennamen hinein identifiziert mit diesem Theater, also deutsch und sorbisch, was mein Familienname ja auch ist. Das war für mich also eine Einheit.

[392] Cf. Wir beten immer vor dem Essen, Sorbisch, dann fassen wie uns an den Händen und sagen auf Polnisch und wenn wir deutschen Besuch haben, gibt es noch einen „Guten Appetit" hinterher. [...]Das Gebet ist in Sorbisch, also das bete ich auch Sorbisch mit, ich bekreuge mich nur nicht.

> *For us [my husband and I], German's demands on Poland to offer compensation is a political topic because my husband defends Poland sometimes not necessarily rationally, but rather emotionally, and I speak from a German viewpoint and say "why not?" Because there were injustices on both sides. In such cases, it is really difficult. We can quarrel about it until we can't argue any more, or we can just stop talking about it right away.*[393] (Ibid.)

When talking with her husband, who stands up for Poland because his mother comes from Poland, Lydia takes the German side. Lydia, however, changes her standpoint from German to Sorbian when she encounters her parents:

> *When I talk about the Sorbs with my parents, they question some things that I then in turn defend for the Sorbs very much. I myself also question these things, but I make a stand against my parents.*[394] (Ibid.)

Lydia's Sorbian identity also emerges when she is at work. As she puts it,

> *In my everyday life in Dresden, [because of my work] I have to deal with the ministries quite a bit. There you hear people say, "Oh, the Sorbs only squabble about everything." But I plant myself in front of them and say at the back of my mind, "Of course, they are right, but it is none of your business. It is a family quarrel, so to speak*.[395] (Ibid.)

For Lydia, defending the Sorbs is a way through which she has developed more understanding for Slavonic people. As far as she is concerned, other German-speaking are scarcely able to put themselves in the Sorbs' position like she does. She personally believes it is the language that makes her understand the Sorbs more, and believes language has enriched her perception. Nevertheless, Lydia is uncertain about her attempts to protect the Sorbs as stated above. She seems to be unable to locate her Sorbian identity and questions her own ambivalent relationship with the Sorbs: "*It is for me, but it is also not for me. It always seems very strange that I defend what is Sorbian when actually I am German*" [396](ibid.). Lydia's positioning varies once again when she, as a German, converses with her Sorbian friends with whom she talks about misunderstandings and the like. While some of them have different opinions, many share much in common. Although she and her friends occasionally have serious clashes,

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[393] Cf. Die Wiedergutmachungsansprüche der Deutschen an Polen, ist für uns politisch ein Thema, weil mein Mann, manchmal auch nicht unbedingt rational, aber emotional, die Polen verteidigt, und ich aber vom deutschen Standpunkt aus sage, warum eigentlich nicht; weil es gab ja Ungerechtigkeiten auf beiden Seiten, da wird es dann einfach wirklich schwierig, da kann man sich da streiten, bis es nicht mehr geht oder gleich aufhören.

[394] Cf. Wenn ich mit meinem Eltern über die Sorben rede, dann wird auch manches infrage gestellt, also wo ich dann wieder Sorbisches sehr verteidige, was ich selber auch infrage stelle, aber da gegenüber mache ich dann wieder Front.

[395] Cf. Oder beim Alltagsleben in Dresden, ich habe auch viel mit Ministerien usw. zu tun, wo dann gesagt wird: „Och, die Sorben, die zanken sich ja alle bloß", also dann stelle ich mich natürlich auch davor und sage im Hinterkopf: „Natürlich haben sie Recht, aber das geht ja nicht, das geht euch nicht an, das ist ein Familiestreit sozusagen."

[396] Cf. Es ist meins, aber es ist doch nicht meins, aber es klingt dann immer komisch, dann verteidige ich das Sorbische, aber ich bin eigentlich deutsch.

she is very happy that everything can be discussed and worked out.

In Lydia's case, her identity is not encapsulated in a homogeneous point, but is rather articulated in a tangle of relationships to other people. As illustrated in the above four scenes of communication – with her husband, her parents, her colleagues and her Sorbian friends, her sense of belonging varies every time, depending on with whom she is speaking. Relationships to others are approached in terms of the positions in which Lydia is standing and the contexts with which the communication between Lydia and other parties is deployed. In this process of interaction with others, the significance of ethnicity not only shifts and changes, but it is also contested. The notion of ethnicity decouples itself from being equivalent with a fixed self-ascription, which is how it functions in a conventional nationalist discourse. It slides into a new position: "a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture" (Hall 1992b: 258). In Hall's view, this new idea of ethnicity frees us from the containment of such a settled position as "ethnic artist". In this sense, all of us are "ethnically located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are. […] This precisely is the politics of ethnicity predicated on difference and diversity" (ibid.).

Hall's new conception of ethnicity involves difference and depends partly on the cultural construction of new ethnic identities (1992b: 257). Difference as seen in Lydia's case approximates the French philosopher Jacques Derrida's notion of difference, which is meaning is produced through a process of deferral and is not a point of fixity; it is able to slide (Woodward 1997: 38). Derrida questions the binary opposition proposed in Saussurian linguistics and Lévi-Strauss's structuralism (Derrida 1978). He argues that opposing terms operate in an imbalance construed in the relations of power: One element is given more weight in terms of value or power than the other (see Derrida 1978: 36, 38). For Derrida, meaning is not fixed in a dichotomy, but is rather present as a "trace". He exemplifies this in his term "*différance*", a term coined by employing the anomalous "a" as a way of writing "*différence*", to emphasize the double meaning of the verb in the French language, which means "to differ" as well as "to defer" or "delay" (Derrida 1982: 7-8, quoted in Milner & Browitt 2002: 115). "*Différance*", as Hall observes, "sets up a disturbance in our settled understanding or translation of the word/concept" (1990: 229). Furthermore, différence "sets the word in motion to new meaning without erasing the *trace* of its other meanings" (ibid, emphasis Hall's, see also Welsch 1987: 144). In other words, "meaning is never finished, or completed, but keeps on moving to encompass other, additional or supplementary meanings, which disturb the classical economy of language and representation" (Hall 1990: 229).

It is difficult for Lydia to locate herself in a fixed position. In the process in which she attempts to locate herself in a certain position, she comes across a heterogeneous sense of herself. Furthermore, it is also an ambivalent self, especially in her dealing with the Sorbian side of herself. Lydia's "self" undergoes a kind of deconstruction. The Vietnamese-American feminist Trinh T. Minh-ha's conception of a "critical difference of myself" opens up another possible perspective on the notion of difference as seen in the case of Lydia. For Trinh, difference stands in relation to self, yet the designation of "*I*s" as a monad is denied. As she points out, "I am not I can be you and me". Simply put, "*I*" is composed of the endless difference that takes place in relations (Rodríguez

2001: 47). Trinh dismantles the idea of a coherent and autonomous sense of self and puts forward: Not one, not two either. 'I' is, therefore, not a unified subject, a fixed identity, or that solid mass covered with layers of superficialities one has gradually to peel off before one can see its true face. 'I' is, itself, *infinite layers*" (Trinh 1989: 94, emphasis Trinh's).

Everyday life – a trinligual family environment and bicultural communication with family members, friends and colleagues – is the realm where Lydia experiences the hybridization of her construction of identity. Hybridity, however, does not mean "a pure mixing" (Ha 1999: 126, 175) of two cultures (Sorbian and German) and of three languages (Sorbian, German and Polish). Rather, hybridity "invariably acknowledges that identity is constructed through a negotiation of difference" (Papastergiadis 1997: 258). Furthermore, "in its most radical form, the concept [of hybridity] is not the combination, accumulation, fusion or synthesis of various components, but an energy field of different forces" (ibid.). In Lydia's every location in terms of a relationship with others, a strategy of negotiation among differences (e.g. the discussion between Lydia and her husband concerning German-Polish relations) inscribed on different matrices which are entangled in personal experiences and collective histories is rendered as a restless process of identification (Bhabha 1994). Simultaneously, Lydia translates cultures in this process: Her identity formations take place across different cultures and connect different positions.

5.3.3 Difference within Gender: Women in East and West Germany

"If we really want to understand current life in Lusatia, we may not simply exclude all the memories of and positive connections with the time of the *DDR*" [397] (Tschernokoshewa 1998: 173). With this remark, Tschernokoshewa somewhat problematizes an epistemological view on understanding people's lives in Lusatia. As she later pinpoints, memories of and links with the time of socialism are parts of people's life experiences, their circles of communication and action constellations (1998: 174). All of these certainly constitute part of everyday culture for Lusatian inhabitants, including the Sorbs and Germans. However, after the elation of Reunification, differences between East and West Germans became increasingly obvious and perceived. Due to forty years of separation, differences between the *BRD* and *DDR* pervade in all spheres of everyday life. Following Niethammer (1991), German ethnologist Klaus Roth and scholar of intercultural communication Juliana Roth locate the cause of different development in East and West Germany in the isolation of the two countries from one another (1999: 164). This isolation "resulted in a lack of interaction and communication which in turn produced different individual and collective experiences and different biographies of millions of people" (ibid.) As both authors further remark, "all this inevitably led to a lack of shared experiences, shared knowledge, and of shared memories" (ibid.).

Reunification put the interaction between the former citizens of both countries on track. However, as discussed in his sociological analysis of the construction of differences between East and West Germans "Ossis, Wessis, Besserwessis: Zur

[397] Cf. Wenn wir das heutige Leben in der Lausitz wirklich verstehen wollen, so dürfen wir nicht alle Erinnerungen und positiven Bezügen zur DDR-Zeit einfach aus dem Bild herausschneiden.

Codierung der Ost/West- Differenz in der öffentlichen Kommunikation" (Easties, Westies, Know-it-all Westies: On the Coding of East/West Difference in Public Communication)(1997), German sociologist Wolfgang Ludwig Schneider argues that frustration with and the disappointment of expectations each had for the other hinder reciprocal interaction (1997: 134f.). Dissatisfied anticipation results from deviant behavior, which is seen as "abnormal" in the other's perception. Deviant behavior is then attributed to person's specific disposition. Meanwhile, the deviation is observed, explained and extensively isolated (1997: 135). No room is thus reserved for the revision of the expectation. In this way, the perceived difference is notched up as an expression of an internal state of mind and characteristics that is specific to the individual (ibid.). The explanation behind deviation frames the person observed as a representative of one social category, and deviant experiences of generalized processing become accessible (ibid.). Moreover, other perceived examples of behavior deviation, which have so far not been categorized according to the typical pattern of the referred collectivity, can be reassigned to activities typical for a certain category and therefore extended into generalized knowledge about members of the observed collectivity (ibid.).

Reunification of the *BRD* and *DDR* did not stand on equal footing, but rather began with the imbalance of political and economical power and asymmetrical and hegemonic relations. The *DDR* was defined as *neue Länder* (new federal states) that were required to undergo *Beitritt* (accession) to the *Budesrepublik Deutschland* (the Federal Republic of Germany) (Roth & Roth 1999: 169f.).This imbalance of power and asymmetry of relations between two countries can be decoded in everyday realities, showing how "it was a takeover in which the West used its power of definition to set the model which the East had to intimate" (Roth & Roth 1999: 170). In this sense, what had constituted East Germans' everyday lives for 40 years was not only ignored but also labeled as backward and stigmatized as being inferior (ibid.). As a reaction to such contempt, East Germans began to look afresh at positive aspects of their lives in the *DDR*. However, life in the DDR-days of yore, particularly positive memories, can all too easily be seen as an expression of "nostalgia". Such "nostalgia" is also called "*Ostalgie*" (from *Ost*, meaning "east", and *Nostalgie*, meaning "nostalgia") – a neologism connoting an affectionate feeling about the past in the *DDR*. This past includes the rehabilitation, (re)production, marketing and merchandising of products from former East Germany as well as "museumification" of everyday life in the *DDR* (Berdahl 1999). "*Ostalgie*" not only involves the production and consumption of East German things, but also embodies former everyday practices inscribed on history and memory (ibid.). Behind the label of "nostalgia" or "*Ostalgie*", former *DDR* citizens are told that "they neglect the necessary *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*" (overcoming the past) (Berdahl 1999: 205). While American anthropologist Daphane Berdahl rejects such view in her study "'(N)Ostalgie' for the Present: Memory, Longing, and East German Things", as this criticism implies that "notions of the *DDR* past as something that must and can be mastered rather than understanding of historical memory as an ongoing process of understanding, negotiation and contestation" (ibid.). In a way, Berdahl shares the same view with Tschernokoshewa as noted at the beginning of this section: Both understand the former *DDR* inhabitant's life experiences, memory and history as the primary point of departure for mapping the sphere of how people identify themselves with the *DDR*. As Berdahl concludes in her study:

> 'Ostalgic' practices reveal a highly complicated relationship between personal histories, disadvantages, dispossession, the betrayal of promises, and the social worlds of production and consumption. These practices thus not only reflect and constitute important identity transformations in a period of intense social discord, but also reveal the politics, ambiguities, and paradoxes of memory, nostalgia, and resistance, all of which are linked to the paths, diversions, and multiple meanings of East German things. (1999: 207)

Women studied here lived much of their lives under socialism. Socialist life experiences in their *DDR* past infuse their identities, as exemplified in the previous analysis of some aspects of everyday life, including waged work and housework (Chapter 4.1), children' education (Chapter 4.2), vacations (Chapter 4.3.4) and interaction with the media (Chapter 4.4.1.3). The women studied here also felt they were misunderstood, devalued and reproached when they interacted with West German women after the Reunification, for example, when the point discussed involved women's emancipation and motherhood. Petra tells us one experience with her West German friends:

> *After the 'Wende', our friends came from the West [Germany]. They are sociologists. They visited us and said, "now you ought to…". They brought books with them, and said, "we should emancipate ourselves. Now you ought to finally…". I said, "I do not have that problem. I do not." I brought up my children alone and as best I could, but I do not need it [emancipation] at all. They did not understand that actually, and they do not want to see that way*.[398] (Interview with Petra, September 23, 2003, in Bautzen)

As shown in the scene, in which Petra and her West German friends were conversing with each other, a disrupted interaction took place between two different ways of understanding emancipation. Moreover, an asymmetry inscribed in western superiority over eastern inferiority can be read between the lines. Furthermore, the interaction between women who have been influenced by different policies toward women in capitalism and socialism articulate two distinct positions on the difference between and within genders. Difference begins with an inquiry into why West German women think that East German women "ought" to emancipate themselves. This involves how much and from which angle West German women understand their female counterparts in East Germany.

Ina Merkel, a German ethnologist of gender studies who focuses on *DDR* women, throws light on my questions here. As noted in her study "Leitbilder und Lebensweise von Frauen in DDR" (Women's Role Models and Ways of Living in the DDR) (1994), West German women, among others, as feminists were astonished to find that East German women did not behave as the feminists they imagined (1994: 360). Before they had the opportunity to talk with East German women, they assumed that *DDR* women

[398] Cf. Nach der Wende kam unsere Freunden aus dem Westen, also die waren Soziologen, die besuchten uns und sagten: „Ihr müsst jetzt...", die brachten Bücher mit, „wir müssen uns emanzipieren, ihr müsst also jetzt endlich...", da habe ich gesagt, „ich habe das Problem nicht, ich habe das nicht." Ich habe meine Kinder alleine groß gezogen, schlecht und recht, aber ich brauche das gar nicht. Und die haben das eigentlich nicht begriffen, also sie wollten das auch nicht so sehen.

were very self-confident, strong and full of a fighting spirit. However, since the *Wende*, they have been confronted with East German women who by no means see themselves as feminists, who address themselves with masculine job titles (e.g. "Ich bin Lehrer", meaning I am a teacher, as opposed to the feminine "ich bin Lehrer*in*") and assert that they had equal rights. They seemed to be women who looked to future with uncertainty and fear and therefore seemed to agree with being sent back home to the stove; women who did not take to the streets on a huge scale against the closing of the first day-care facility or for defending their right to self-determined abortion (ibid.). As Merkel put it, she can understand West German feminists' disappointment, but she does not share this disappointment with them because she does not share their images of *DDR* women. In Merkel's view,

> these are ideas which have been influenced by the media, art and literature of the *DDR* for over 40 years and were taken up or spread through Western media with empathy. They are images which move between the poles of work animals and exhausted mothers, of super women and colorless nondescript sorts of people, of exemplary emancipation and compulsory emancipation. However, what do such stereotypes have to do with the real lives of *DDR* women, their dreams and hopes?[399] (Ibid.)

As discussed earlier, stereotyping is an exercise of unequal powers (see Chapter 5.3.1). *DDR* women become fixed in the mechanism of stereotyping, through which they are also excluded as homogenous Others whose actual life experiences, such as their relationship to work, family, children and gender relations, are monopolized in the West German understanding of womanhood and motherhood. Therefore, "you ought to …" in this context can be decoded as an expression that East German women should follow in West German women's footsteps. "Bringing books and asking East German women to read them" is the prerequisite for East German women to know what emancipation is. Then East German women "could join in the conversation" (Notz 1994: 306). This emancipation is the very pattern defined by West German women. In their view, East German women "should have been" happy that they were no longer loaded with double burden of work and family, or they "could have been" happy to go back to their families and "could have found" their lives fulfilled (see Notz 1994: 305). However, Petra told her West German friends that she did not have the problem they imagined she did. Nonetheless, they did not understand, and they did not want to understand what Petra meant, either. The scholar of social sciences, Gisela Notz, who has encountered the same experience as Petra in various workshops and conferences, stated that "Often enough, I have experienced in conferences how women from the West came to the *DDR* for the first time. However, they gave me the impression that they did not want to listen at all what *DDR* women had to say to them. They already knew everything better"[400] (1994: 306).

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[399] Cf. Es sind Vorstellungen, die, wie ich denke, über vierzig Jahre von den Medien, der Kunst und Literatur der DDR geprägt und von den Westmedien mit Emphase aufgegriffen oder auch kolportiert worden sind. Es sind Bilder, die sich in den Polen von Arbeitstier und abgehetzter Mutter, von Superfrau und grauer Maus, von beispielhafter Emanzipation und Zwangsemanzipation bewegen. Was aber haben diese Stereotype mit dem wirklichen Leben, den Träumen und Hoffnungen von DDR-Frauen zu tun?

[400] Cf. Oft genug habe ich in Konferenzen erleben, zu denen Westfrauen zum ersten Mal in die DDR gekommen waren, jedoch den Eindruck hinterließen, dass sie gar nicht hören wollten, was die DDR-

Besides emancipation, motherhood is the other issue that received much attention in the interaction between East and West German women. As German feminists Ulrike Helwerth (West German) and Gislinde Schwarz (East German) point out in the report on their two-year research project "Fremde Schwestern" (Unfamiliar Sisters), "whether through the experiences *with* mothers or *as* mothers, mothers are at the core of the women question, and they contribute to the difference between East and West considerably" (1996: 5, emphasis Helwerth and Schwarz's).

The case of Martina below shows what difference lies in the conception of motherhood in the West and East:

> *I have always worked. From 1965 onward, my children were born, and I took the permitted job leave and left my job temporarily. Then I sent my children to daycare and kindergarten and then continued to work all the time without interruption. It went alright. My children developed well and they are good people. People from the old federal states [West Germany] always accuse us that we did not take care of our children well because we sent them to daycare and kindergarten. You often hear: "No, a mother must stay home and take care of her children. Daycare and kindergarten do not take good care of children.*"[401]
> (Interview with Martina, September 9, 2003, in Dresden)

Martina was a teacher, and she could therefore better manage her time with her children. She sent her children to kindergarten at 7:30 in the morning and picked them up at three in the afternoon. She emphasized that she made good use of the time with her children and undertook many activities with them. As she argues, *"I always believe if parents do not have much time to be with their children, if they make good use of this time, then they can do more things than those who are with their children all day long and sit in front of television and say, 'So…'"*[402](ibid.).

Lydia shares the same view with Martina. As far as she is concerned, "*the daycare and kindergarten where we took our children were not negative*"[403] (interview with Lydia, October 3, 2003, in Bautzen). Like Martina, Lydia also worked full-time. Her everyday life thus had to be clearly planned. She said, "*we were lucky to have daycare institutions here. All three of my children went to daycare and kindergarten*"[404] (ibid.). Lydia could not take care of her children all day long, but she does not see any negative consequences on her children. On the contrary, she says "*they therefore can cook, iron, do the shopping and so on. They can do everything*"[405] (ibid.). Martina and Lydia's

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Frauen ihnen zu sagen gehabt hätten. Sie wussten eh schon alles besser.

[401] Cf. Ich habe immer gearbeitet, von 1965 an, Kinder bekommen, aber dann die Auszeit genommen, die uns zustand, und dann habe ich die Kinder in die Krippe oder in den Kindergarten gebracht und dann weiter gearbeitet, die ganze Zeit, ohne Unterbrechung. Aber es ging auch, und sie haben sich gut entwickelt, sie sind ordentliche Menschen geworden, weil immer uns vorgeworfen wird von den alten Bundesländern, wir haben und nicht genügend um unsere Kinder gekümmert, weil wir die Kinder in eine Einrichtung gegeben haben, das hört man oft: „Nein, eine Mutter muss zu Hause bleiben und die Kinder betreuen, und eine Betreuung im Kindergarten oder in Krippe ist nicht gut."

[402] Cf. Ich glaube immer, wenn auch wenig Zeit ist für die Eltern, mit den Kindern zusammen zu sein, wenn diese Zeit richtig genutzt wird, gut genutzt wird, kann man mehr erreichen, als wenn man den ganzen Tag mit ihnen zusammen ist, sie vor den Fernseher setzt und sagt, „So...".

[403] Cf. Die Einrichtung, die sie [meine Kinder] besucht haben, die waren nicht negativ.

[404] Cf. Wir hatten hier das große Glück, Kindereinrichtungen zu haben. Es sind alle drei Kinder in der Kindergrippe gewesen, im Kindergarten.

[405] Cf. Ich habe mich nicht den ganzen Tag um sie gekümmert, aber dafür können sie kochen, bügeln,

emphasis on their children's positive development can be seen as attempts to repudiate and reverse the reproof from West Germans by seeking to valorize for the self what has been devalued as "bad mothers" in the West German understanding of the concept of motherhood.

As seen in the above two cases, working full-time constitutes an important part of their lives. The fact that 90 % of women in the *DDR* entered the labor market had a fundamental influence on life styles and mentality in the *DDR*. In contrast, in the *BRD*, only 50.3 % of the women worked (Merkel 1994: 359). This large gap in the working rate when comparing the women of the two countries hints at the different social contexts in which West and East German women were located in terms of work and family. As Merkel remarks, the East German "*Mutti*" (mother), who seeks to reconcile work and children and gain moral and material support from society (ibid.). However, in contrast to the East German "*Mutti*", we have the West German "*Rabenmutter*" (uncaring [brute of a] mother/bad mother), which is a denouncement of working mothers as careerist and selfish (ibid.). These two concepts, in Merkel's view, are ideology-slanted and refer to a social context in which women's employment is either wanted or undesirable (1994: 360). As she further points out, that this exemplary difference has an important consequence for German women's lives and their self-image makes it clear just how problematic the process of bringing the two Germanys closer to one another is (ibid.).

It is important to note that "the concept of 'mother' is not merely given in natural processes (pregnancy, birth, lactation, nurturance), but is a cultural construction which different societies build up and elaborate in different ways." (Moore 1988: 25). Different constructs of motherhood in the *BRD* and the *DDR* can be decoded as an expression of being "an verschiedenen Orten" (in different places), as suggested in the title of Christine Eifler's study (1991) in which the difference between East and West German women in terms of women's studies, women's movement and women's issues in the *DDR* are explored. The difference in women's actual situations, ways of perceiving and experiences are as different as the histories of both countries since 1945 (Eifler 1991: 3). Avtar Brah, now Professor in Sociology at Birkbeck University of London, puts her view on "difference as experience" that helps us not to see East and West German women's respective experiences in terms of motherhood as a pre-given reality, "but rather […] itself a cultural construction" (1996: 116). Moreover, experience is

> a process of signification which is the very condition for the constitution of what we call 'reality'. Hence, the need to re-emphasize a notion of experience not as an unmediated guide to 'truth' but as a practice of making sense, both symbolically and narratively; as a struggle over material conditions and meaning. (Ibid.)

The way West and East German women perceived and conceived the meaning of motherhood differently is also culturally constructed. As Brah tells us, "the myriad of unpredictable ways in which such constructions may configure in the flux of her psyche; and, invariably, upon the political repertoire of cultural discourses available to her"

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und einkaufen und so was, das können sie alles.

(1996: 117). Constructions of motherhood in West and East Germany are one part of the collective histories of citizens of the former *BRD* and *DDR* states. They are also "culturally constructed in the process of assigning meaning to the everyday of social relations" (ibid.).

Unlike the contrasting views on motherhood and womanhood as noted in the preceding, Heike, has had different experiences as a mother during the period of the former *DDR* and in the West after the Reunification: "*I had one child in the East, my son, and brought him up in the DDR. Then I had my daughter in West, so to say, and raised her there*"[406] (interview with Heike, October 2, 2003, in Eula). For Heike, the difference between East and West Germany cannot be absolutized as "*one is better; the other is worse*"[407] (ibid.), but rather "*it's a completely different way of living*"[408] (ibid.) after the Reunification. As a mother, she recognized the good conditions of child care in the *DDR*, but she says, "*I am happy that I do not live in* the *DDR any more; but I am sad that some certain things are lost which we had before*"[409] (ibid.).

Heike's view is helpful here for working toward an understanding of the concept of difference. The meaning of motherhood and womanhood in both countries is not framed in the difference between binary oppositions, such as good vs. bad, which are loaded with value judgment that cannot be categorized in a mutually exclusive dualism of "Self" and "Other". Instead, they are different ways of living. Ilse Lenz, a German scholar of gender studies, suggests that we take difference as a point of departure for understanding East German women's everyday lives so that we can redefine our insights into the exclusion of women – women's everyday experiences are ignored, made invisible and marginalized – in new terms, meaning differences are recognized and considered in association with the social contexts in which the people studied are located (1991: 23). For Lenz, it is important to configure gender together with other forms of social differences, such as class and ethnicity. Furthermore, interrelation between gender in different classes, ethnic groups and milieus should also be taken into consideration. Finally, a convergence of actions or of conscious politics of women and men in different relations helps us to capture a sense of difference. As Lenz contends, a possible important convergence for West and East German women may take place in the following discussions on abortion regulations, the dramatic rate of unemployment among women, child care and social infrastructures, protests against increasing public violence from neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists against foreigners, lesbians and gays, and resistance to domestic violence against women and girls (1991: 24f.). To say with Lenz, the opportunity to enrich experiences, cultures and ideas is chance shared both by East German women and West German women (1991: 25).

In conclusion, as seen in the interaction and the confrontation between East and West German women in terms of the construction of womanhood and motherhood, the women under study position themselves in the wider political, social and cultural context connected to East Germany. *DDR* life experiences and collective identity as East Germans constitute parts of my informants' biographies. However, the encounter

[406] Cf. Ich habe ein Kind im Osten bekommen, mein Sohn, groß gezogen, und die Tochter habe ich sozusagen im West bekommen und groß gezogen.
[407] Cf. Eine ist besser und das andere schlechter irgendwie.
[408] Cf. Das ist eine völlig andere Art zu leben.
[409] Cf. Ich bin froh, dass ich nicht mehr in DDR lebe, und ich bin auch traurig darüber, dass bestimmte Dinge verloren gegangen sind, die es eben da doch gab.

with West German women makes those studied rethink their lives that were once contextualized in socialism. This rethinking, at the same time, involves East German women's relations to West Germans. Traces of East German experiences and West German interpellation on their roles as women and mothers give rise to "hybridity". As Bhabha argues, "the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity [to Bhabha] is the 'the third space' which enables other positions to emerge" (1990: 211). For women under study, "the third space" that emerges in the tension between East German lives, memories as well as experiences and West German attempts to totalize the concepts of womanhood and motherhood makes them redefine their identity as East Germans. This redefining of East German women contains the relation to West German construction of womanhood and motherhood. It is also in this process of redefining that those studied reposition themselves in remembering and commemorating *DDR* life, on which they construct their identity for the present.

5.4 Summary and Conclusion

To excavate new conceptions of culture and identity, living with and through differences and life experience as defined by hybridity, is the main concern in this chapter. In the first section, I discussed several women's actual dealings with cultural traits denoting Sorbian-ness and Sorbian tradition as exemplified in the Easter Procession Rides and in women's dealings with traditional Sorbian costumes. Notwithstanding religious custom, the Easter Procession Rides are considered to be one of the most consistent, significant Sorbian traditions to be maintained over the centuries, although it is actually constantly varying, and its interpretation and meaning are constantly undergoing change. Every individual has his/her own way of visiting or participating in the Easter Procession Rides. Much the same can be said about the traditional costumes: As in the cases of Ina, Angela and Maria, women also have their own ways of coping with Sorbian clothes. Their ethnic and cultural background may be one of the causes that motivate them to dress in a traditional Sorbian way. However, gender roles, social interaction, and life experiences are also variably implicated in their intentions and acts of wearing Sorbian costumes. Their individual feelings, actions and experiences regarding handling the traditional Sorbian dress yield a novel way of envisioning wearing a culturally significant outfit. Still, it must be noted that social structures and cultural systems cannot be left out of consideration. As Ulf Hannerz remarks, a flow of externally available, culturally shaped meaning still influences our experiences (1992: 65). However, as Hannerz also states, an individual is "not merely a passive recipient of all sorts of available meaning" (ibid.). In the process of contemplation, an individual is "actively involved in dealing practically, intellectually, and emotionally with his particular situation" (ibid.). To take an example, a Sorb's attitude toward Easter and the Easter Procession Rides can be seen in the interrelationship between external structures and individual agency. Through an individual's extension and modification of culturally fashioned meaning, the significance of Easter, the Easter Rides and Sorbian culture are produced, reproduced, and are always undergoing constant change.

In the second part of this chapter, I have attempted to deepen the dynamism and

incoherence of identity by taking two Sorbian organizations outside Lusatia – *SKI* in Berlin and *Sorbentreff* in Dresden – as examples. The establishment of and the participation in these extraterritorial ethnic organizations make the concept of homeland, which is commonly understood in a "natural" connection between identity and place, undergo a transformation. As seen in the case studies, "homeland" is constructed in interactions and social relationships as well as in the creation of social situations. Furthermore, through the life experiences of the Sorbs who live in Berlin and in Dresden, they may connect themselves with people in Lusatia in some way, such as through the decoration of Easter eggs; while they may show difference in other aspects, for example, different perceptions and understandings of the meaning of homeland. Moreover, through the social situations as exemplified in the activities and events organized in the gatherings held by these two organizations, the Sorbian people living in these two cities cross the boundaries between the Sorbs and other groups, e.g. Czech people in Berlin. However, they may differentiate from each other in some fields. For my informants, their identities are constructed in a complex array of positionings and repositionings across similarities and differences in relations to others.

In the third section of this chapter, I draw on the concept of difference to try to chart how identity is variously constructed in relation to difference. Hall's remark on identity resonates with my analysis; as he puts it,

> We have the notion of identity as contradictory, as composed of more than one discourse, as composed always across the silences of the other, as written in and through ambivalence and desire. They are extremely important ways of trying to think an identity which is not a sealed or closed totality. (Hall 2000 [1997]: 49)

Helga's experience at her workplace, accompanied by memories of what happed to her in her childhood, is the point of attachment around which a dynamic formation of identity has been constructed. Embedded along the axes of the experiences made in her childhood and in her career life, difference emerges and its connotation undergoes a transformative process. Helga's action of reversing the dominant discourse on the difference fixed in the binarism and marginality excluded from the center challenges and disturbs the dominance, further changes it, and finally breaks down the authority by enhancing difference and marginality. Lydia's case aligns the notion of difference with an idea of a sliding in meaning in terms of ethnic identity. In every single scene of communication with others, Lydia's subject position varies. Her attempt to look for a unambiguous location, however, comes across as a heterogeneous, ambivalent and a multi-layered sense of self. This can be decoded as an expression of hybridity inscribed in her identity, but we need to aware that hybridity at this point is not a mere mixing, but rather an energy field with different forces as demonstrated in Lydia's interaction with different counterparts in various settings of communication. The interaction and confrontation between West German women and my informants who locate themselves in the context of East Germany after the Reunification of Germany reveal a debate over difference within gender. Differences between East German women and West German women are perceived in the different ways of constructing of womanhood and motherhood. The encounter between women in East and West Germany emphatically marks a double sense of difference: 1) The West German-centered understanding of

womanhood and motherhood fixes East German difference in a static point; 2) East German women's defense against West German reproach by voicing out their experience as difference. However contradictory in their understandings of the concepts of woman and mother, East and West German women could converge in sharing experiences, cultures and ideas. For my informants, through the encounter with West German women, their identities as East German women are redefined.

New terrains where Sorbian identity can be unearthed have been brought to light in this chapter. New conceptions of Sorbian identity entail a reconsideration of the generally held understanding of Sorbian culture. It involves a series of subject positions and sets of differences inscribed on relationships with others and connotes a term which addresses the personal biographies, collective histories, cultural experiences, political positions and social relations through which identity is constructed. Identity as an on-going process propelled by people's incessant oscillation between positionings and repositionings frees people from rigid cultural frames, allowing them to move across and live with and through differences of culture, identity and gender, and enable them to experience their lives in the process of hybridity. All of these lead to a renewed conception of Sorbian culture: Sorbian *cultures*.

CONCLUSION

The main concern of this study is to discuss how the women studied here who identify themselves as/with Sorbs construct their identities in the modern world, how they approach a sense of self and how they position themselves in their everyday life, what kind of processes they undergo in their identity construction, and which factors are implicated in the formation of identities. Investigating the Sorbian minority as the research subject, with a focus on female gender, primarily involves intersections of ethnicity and gender, which serves as the point of departure for this study. As research progressed, women's gradual active construction of gender and ethnicity whilst pursuing their everyday lives revealed a construction of multifarious and complex identifications across differences of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion and class. The results of research, as illustrated in the last chapter of this study, "POSITIONINGS AND REPOSITIONINGS ACROSS CULTURES, GENDERS AND IDENTITIES," create Sorbian culture anew, craft Sorbian identity afresh and render the notion of Sorbian women in new terms. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, new meanings encased in these conceptions actually contain an active and transformative impetus. This thrust forces these ideas to undergo a process of redefinition. It is the life experiences people have in everyday practices that impel us to envisage identity construction as a dynamic, never-ending and open-ended articulation of one's positionings.

In the conclusion of this study, a summary of all chapters (from 2 to 5) is in order. Several key points inspiring deliberation regarding the concepts of ethnicity, ethnic identity and gender will be discussed. Finally, the possibility of transferring the research outcomes of this study to other similar case studies will be discussed and the findings of this study clarified in more detail.

Let me first begin by summing up the argument in Chapter 2. The analysis in Chapter 2 "THE EMERGENCE OF AN IMAGINED SORBIAN COMMUNITY" points toward the many ways of tackling the question, "Why is it widely understood that the received categories of Sorbian origin, family, languages, traditions, customs and religion (Catholicism) monopolize the definition of Sorbian-ness?" Studies of nationalism help us to better understand this issue. Above all, the deconstruction of the nation as a creation and production of nationalism, best expressed in the idea of an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983), helps us to reconsider the prevailing, well-established and deeply rooted view that people "naturally" feel they are members in a nation or an ethnic group as a matter of course. As far as I am concerned, history, language and tradition are the very elements which conjure up the sense of belonging to an ethnic collectivity felt by ordinary Sorbs. In the case of the Sorbs, their history is not only an ethnic history, but also a minority one. This focuses on their articulating themselves as a *Volk* (people) and staking off Lusatia as the "Sorbian" homeland, which they then deploy as a counterforce to the threat and pressure applied by assimilation and conquest in a historical context and as a means of distinction from the Germans. However, such linear assimilation narratives embedded in the present

(becoming an ethnic minority) as a corollary of the past (Germanization) need to be used with caution, as they are not a "natural" result of the past, but rather a nationalist strategy with which ethnic leaders build Sorbian identity. Various nationalist undertakings, as noted in this chapter, are a vital means through which people's sense of belonging to the Sorbian people and their love for and connection with Sorbian Lusatia are evoked. The printed Sorbian language, among other things, has been an inherent part of the nationalist projects and has played an extraordinary crucial part in making people feel that their membership in the Sorbian community is natural. Besides language, tradition has pervaded in the main terms that define the maintenance and construction of Sorbian-ness. In my view, of the emblems of tradition (music, folksongs, religious holidays such as Easter), traditional Sorbian costumes can best demonstrate the construction of Sorbian-ness as an overt visual marker for the boundary between the Sorbs and others. It is usually women who dress in traditional costumes. Sorbian women's practice of dressing in traditional ethnic clothes is naturally symbolized as a repository of value inherent in the conservation of the religious and national life of the Sorbs. In the process of passing on languages and traditions to future generations, Sorbian women are assigned the role of guardians and cultural reproducers of Sorbian collectivity, as exemplified in the term "*serbska mać*. The analysis of the history, language and tradition of the Sorbs provides fertile ground for understanding the process in which the Sorbs have been portrayed as "one" people. We are also thus equipped with knowledge of the way the multiple histor*ies*, language*s* and tradition*s* have been constructed as exclusively "Sorbian" and transformed into the core of Sorbian culture. However, this suffocates internal difference and the interests of different social groups, such as women, and therefore thwarts plurality, diversity, innovation and modernity. The report *So langsam wird's Zeit: Kulturelle Perspektiven der Sorben in Deutschland* from 1994 endeavors to promote and strengthen the vitality, liveliness and viability of Sorbian culture. The report breaks new ground by making suggestions regarding the development of the Sorbs and their culture by means of examining the gamut of perspectives on Sorbian culture. Most important of all, the *point d'appui* on which the report relies is the culture of everyday life. The variety flourishing in the world of everyday life shatters the anti-modern impetus, boundaries and coherence cemented in the nationalist schemes and entrenched in the essentialist deployment of cultural elements.

Everyday life experiences and practices reload these notions with dynamism. Meanwhile, accordance with and contradiction to different others are all included and variably weighted in their everyday practices. The heterogeneity codified in people's quotidian lives manifests identity construction in a never-ending process. Ethnic identity is one of the prime examples of this. In the Sorbian discourse, the notion of ethnicity achieves centrality by bringing about a strategy of collective self-organization in order to accomplish social existence and recognition within German society; at the same time, a mechanism of inclusion (creating a unified "inside") and exclusion (marking boundaries and excluding the Other "outside") is involved in the construction of Sorbian ethnicity. All the elements considered to be the resources of Sorbian ethnicity, e.g. origin, history, language and tradition, are simultaneously congregated and consolidated into the solid oneness of a Sorbian people.

However, as seen in my informants' life experiences, ethnic identity cannot be

conceived in binary terms, but is rather constructed in "A DIALECTIC PROCESS OF ETHNICIZATION AND ETHNICITY" which is the main focus of Chapter 3. The interrelationship between these processes occurs in the social interaction and communication between Germans and Sorbs, between Sorbs and (non-)Sorbs, i.e. Germans who speak Sorbian, and between Sorbs and German-speaking Sorbs. It emerges in various forms within different temporal and spatial contexts. Ethnicity is neither a given fact nor an inherent attribute; it is rather understood as the product of the social construction processes of the members of the ethnic group themselves. It is also a reaction to ethnicization, which is conceived as a process in which a group of people is described as an ethnic minority by the dominant majority. Notably, the construction of ethnic identity is not only the product of the interrelationship between ethnicization and ethnicity, but it also arises because of other forms of difference, such as gender. As illustrated in various case studies in this chapter, women are objectified as cultural reproducers expected to fulfill nationalist tasks, such as maintaining and developing their mother tongue; in the meantime, they are also "Othered" by the intact bulwark entrenched in the bounded and closed view of culture and ethnicity.

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, ethnic identity is produced in an interactive process of ethnicization and ethnicity. It involves a variety of elements, such as origin, history, family, homeland, language and tradition, which contribute to people's sense of belonging to a Sorbian collectivity. Nonetheless, the everyday life experiences of those being researched reveal their identity construction as a process. Moreover, in the practices of everyday life, the focal point is on how a particular set of individuals live and deal with certain cultural constituents which are regarded as identity resources, such as the factors as listed above, rather than ascribing the identity of those studied to being the bearers of those cultural traits in a homogenous way.

The practice of everyday life also reveals that ethnicity is only one of various forms of difference that constitute people's identities in the modern world. Those studied still have other identities, as exemplified in their identification with East Germany. In Chapter 4, "IDENTITIES THROWN TOGETHER – EVERYDAY LIFE EXPERIENCES", I argue that their identities are not confined to Sorbian culture, but are rather mediated through a series of subject positions and sets of differences in their everyday interaction and communication with others in various social contexts. As seen in some of the dimensions of everyday life that I take up in this study, such as work, child education, leisure activities and cultural consumptions, a variety of forms of differences – gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, class – may become entangled with one another, while they may also contradict one another in the process of identity construction. No certain form of difference ought to be granted predominance over another. Instead, each form of difference may become differently weighted in different contexts. This is to say that in particular situations, ethnic identity may take priority over other forms of difference, while in another situations, gender or religion may act as a defining difference. Simultaneously, various factors, be they social, historical, political, economical or biographical, articulate the variety of people's positions in every situation. Additionally, external social structures and cultural systems exert a certain influence over people's actions, choices and strategies. Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that people are the passive recipients of these external influences; rather they actively handle and involve themselves in the interrelationship between external

structures and individual agency.

As illustrated in a variety of examples in Chapter 4, my informants' everyday practices stress that their identities are constructed in various cultures, in different contexts and across many sets of differences. As can be seen in the practices of everyday life, the scrutiny aimed at the wide range of case studies of miscellaneous aspects of day-to-day life prevents those being studied from being seen as the bearers of an essentialized and homogenized Sorbian culture and reveals them as acting agents who approach a sense of self dynamically and variably in different relations to others, at various moments, and in different contexts. Multiple identities are the product of such processes in which the women studied become capable of coping with and negotiating among an assortment of factors, be they historical, cultural, political or social.

In the construction of multiple identities, some cultural resources that signify "Sorbian" and Sorbian identity – such as Easter Procession Rides and traditional Sorbian costumes – become redefined and therefore infused with new meanings. This is one of the central issues of Chapter 5. Moreover, the notion of the "Sorbian homeland" is redefined and transformed through my informants' establishment of and participation in two extraterritorial ethnic organizations – the *Sorbentreff* in Dresden and the *SKI* in Berlin. In addition to the notion of the homeland, the concept of identity referred to in the two case studies of Helga and Lydia also needs to be rethought: Identity must be conceived of in relation to difference. That is to suggest that the notion of identity operates within a mutual interlinking between how difference is inscribed on identity and how identity becomes marked by difference. Those women studied here who position themselves in the context of East Germany provide us with another example with which to approach the question of how identity is constructed in its reciprocal interaction with difference. The identification of these women with East Germany involves their life experiences and memories of the *DDR*, relations to West Germany and West German women, and their rethinking of the concepts of womanhood and motherhood in socialism. In addition to the cases of Helga and Lydia, the difference within gender exemplified in the confrontation between Eastern and Western German women shows us that identity is neither presumed as an *a priori* and innate attribute, nor is it deduced as a solid and static essence. Furthermore, identity is never absolutized and singularized in only one form; rather it is pluralized across a chain of subject positions and a variety of differences. It changes variably and dynamically in relation to different others with whom the acting agents interact and communicate.

The above summary offers an outline of this study in which the most significant results of research are recapitulated. In the following, I therefore will further broaden the anthropological discourse of ethnicity, ethnic identity and gender by drawing on the results of this study.

In this study on the Sorbs in Germany, ethnicity serves as one of the key points for deepening our understanding the Sorbian people. In the introductory chapter on theories and the chapters which follow (among others, chapters 2 and 3), ethnicity is conceptualized as a form of social organization that views ascriptive identities of ethnic group members as crucial, rather than as objective cultural contents (Barth 1969a). Ethnicity involves a process of inclusion and exclusion in which the mechanism of homogenization and differentiation is set to generate a unified "inside" and exclude the

Other "outside". Simultaneously, it connotes a process of boundary-making that is only possible through the interaction in and between groups. In addition to conceptualizing ethnicity as interpersonal interaction on individual bases, ethnicity involves a large-scale level which is implicated in the production and reproduction of a we-consciousness as a political strategy asserting the group's social existence. The very reason that my attention centers on observing ethnicity as a process of acting agents' mutual ascription and identification lies in my aim of (de-)constructing Sorbian ethnicity and thereby revealing the agency of the individual. Such a thesis is nothing new in the anthropological theory of ethnicity, but it is an attempt to intervene in the conventional Sorbian nationalist discourse. Moreover, a variety of case studies (as in Chapter 3) not only challenge the fixed conceptualization of ethnic identity as a static and ahistorical essence which has long revolved around the criteria of ancestry, family, language, customs, tradition and religion in the Sorbian discourse, but they also expose ethnic identity as a dynamic, mutually constitutive process of ethnicization and ethnicity. In other words, ethnic identity is conceptualized as an interdependent social process of attribution of ethnic identity by others and self-ascribed ethnic identity.

For this reason, I have emphasized the relational and situational aspects of ethnic identity in this study and have focused primarily on women's individual choices and strategies, interpersonal interactions and social communications. At the same time, however, I argue that ethnic identity is also a complex result of interwoven imperative and chosen identification. This indicates that both external constraints and situational selection should be taken into consideration in the analysis of the formation of ethnic identity. Theoretically, this can be traced back to the criticism of the Barthian model of ethnicity (1969) that emphatically focuses on individual choices while paying insufficient attention to external structures and power relations (e.g. Jenkins 1994, Eriksen 2002 [1993] and 2004, see also Chapter 1.1.3). The Barthian notion of ethnicity and ethnic identity helps me to look at the Sorbs as well as other case studies because it disrupts the previously dominant custom of equating ethnic groups with cultural units and of focusing on actors' choices in the process of identification. This is a central aspect of my study, but this does not mean that I ignore the significance of external structures. In my study, these structural aspects are illustrated by the following cases: For example, Helga's feeling devalued as a child and discriminated against by being associated with animals in Nazi ideology (Chapter 3.1.2), or Anita's being reduced to a villager who is believed to speak only Sorbian and an A-class student who speaks non-standard Sorbian (Chapter 3.1.3). As to these case studies, I have already showed that ethnicization – which is the exogenous factors of ethnic identity-building, meaning the attribution of ethnic identity by others – imposes "Sorbian-ness" and "Otherness" on those ethnicized, thereby articulating their ethnic identity. In these situations, ethnic identity appears to be enforced. In extreme cases, for example in Helga's childhood, and for other Sorbs who experienced the Nazis (e.g. Paula and Emma's father), "Sorbian identity" can be described as a "stigmatised identity" associated with inferiority, undesirability and discrimination. Upon confrontation with such a situation, Emma's father reacted by hiding his Sorbian-ness and not speaking Sorbian in public to this day (Chapter 3.1.2), while Helga transformed this perpetually-imposed difference filled with inferiority and marginality into self-assertion and self-enhancement (Chapter 5.3.1). In this sense, Helga's experience in her childhood shows us that ethnic identity

is in one way imperative, but also not absolutely enforced, because she, as an acting agent, twists the content and meaning of "Sorbian identity", merging structure with agency.

Imperative ethnic identity is therefore not always present. Instead, it should be emphasized that it emerges situationally; for instance, in certain historical contexts, as exemplified by the Nazis in Germany. Or it comes out in certain societies where ethnicity plays a keynote in politics, for example in Fiji or Mauritius, where ethnicity may be the primary feature that one becomes aware of when meeting a new person (Eriksen 2004: 161). To put it succinctly, imperative identity, in a way, encloses situational choices. For example, one cannot rid of his/her self of Sorbian identity when he/she is asked or expected to be a "Sorb" or to show his/her "Sorbian-ness" in a "Sorbian" festival, but he/she can choose to play down his/her Sorbian identity at the workplace.

In sum, in this study ethnic identities are constructed in a dialectic process of ethnicization and ethnicity, relationally and situationally, while also oscillating between external constraints and situational choices. All of this renders ethnic identities not static, but rather dynamic and variable.

In addition to the above discussion on ethnic identity, there is still one point concerning ethnicity that needs our attention: the relationship between ethnicity and culture. This emerges in the debate on the role of culture in ethnicity studies (Eriksen 2002 [1993]: 56). The extremes are illustrated in the controversy between "primordialist" (e.g. Geertz 1973 [1963]) and "instrumentalist" standpoints on ethnicity (e.g. A. Cohen 1969, 1974). The former argues that an ethnic group is a given unit that is culturally defined; while the latter holds that culture enters into ethnicity only in so far as it can be exploited politically –as a cultural symbol used as a political strategy for the competition for resources (ibid.). However, as A. P. Cohen's research on the symbolic construction of community (1985) and British social anthropologist Richard Jenkin's study on the Protestant-Catholic conflict in Northern Ireland (1997) argue, it is evident that "cultural stuff" is still important to those studied (ibid.). This is similar regarding my own study on the Sorbs. Immersing myself in the process of studying the Sorbs, looking at my observations when I interact with the women studied and interview them, certainly parallels my experiences dealing with ethnic issues in my own country. I find it would be misleading to simply separate culture from ethnicity because people talk about "culture" (which is usually associated with "cultural content" as exemplified in language, tradition, customs, and is easily used as an equivalent for society) when they mention or consider ethnicity. Here I need to reassert my position in studying the Sorbs: I undoubtedly distance myself from all forms of cultural determinism and essentialism. What I am first and foremost concerned with is rendering those studied acting agents whose agency, practices and strategies are put at the center of attention in the processes of identification. Such *point d'appui* is accorded much significance when studying the Sorbs, as is very often repeated in this book; the Sorbs have primarily been culturally defined and determined in the conventional Sorbian discourse. Their actual everyday life has been thus veiled under the rubric of Sorbian culture. Therefore in terms of the relationship between ethnicity and culture, in my view, it would be more meaningful to ask why people connect culture with ethnicity (something particularly evident in nationalism, see Chapters 1.2.1 and 2), what this

means to them, and in which context the group in question perceives ethnicity as an expression of cultural difference in social interaction. Most importantly, the perspective from which we study ethnicity and culture means disclosing how these are constructed, produced and reproduced in cultural discourses and everyday practices, rather than taking them as a natural given and substantializing them as a static essence.

In Sorbian cultural discourses, such as those in Sorbian ethnic and nationalist projects, ethnicity and culture are homogenized into a Sorbian "whole", although the relationship between ethnicity and culture is actually not identical to the way it is represented. In this ethnic and nationalist process, history, language and tradition become the central constituents with which a Sorbian community is imagined as an oneness. In such a process, innumerable histories have been joined into *one* Sorbian history, various regional dialects and languages reduced into two standard Sorbian languages (which is usually reduced into *one* Sorbian language when outside the Sorbian community), and a range of traditions marked as "Sorbian". This is a process of homogenization and essentialization in which these cultural elements have become naturalized as inherent attributes of the Sorbian people. Moreover, the multiplicity, plurality, variety and diversity which were originally in existence in the histories, languages and traditions of different regions of Lusatia and among the Sorbs with different biographical backgrounds have eroded in favor of creating a "unified" Sorbian people. However, in my view, it is important to point out one thing in terms of the identity work and nation building in the case of the Sorbs: The process of establishing the Sorbs as a *Volk* (people) actually involves a connection with other peoples and ties to other cultures. The tidal wave of Pietism, the German Enlightenment, German romantic nationalism, the civil democratic development of the 19th century, and Slavonic national rebirth, e.g. the Czech and Polish nationalist movements, to name a few examples, were all sources of inspiration for Sorbian nationalist strategies, plans and undertakings.

As illustrated in the above analysis, cultural homogenization is created out of actual heterogeneity (Williams 1989). Therefore, as I shall argue, the relationship between ethnicity and culture is far from being linear: The Sorbs have actually never been the bounded and isolated group of people with a "pure" Sorbian culture whom the ethnic elites and activists have strived to present, produce and reproduce as a "survival strategy" in a society where they have been made a minority. This is particularly apparent in the practices of social interaction and everyday life. The everyday practices of those studied further show that members of ethnic groups are not confined to *one* culture, but rather several *cultures* (Chapter 4).

As demonstrated in the biographical experiences of the women studied, their identities are saturated with socialist value orientation and the past of Eastern Germany because they have lived much of their lives under socialism. Their daily lives under socialism and their experiences as women and mothers in the *DDR*, with waged work, housework, raising children, taking vacations and interacting with media, exemplify that the women being researched are far from belonging to and locating themselves in merely one culture. Among other things, the construction of womanhood and motherhood inseparably involved in the aspects of waged work, housework and child education addresses the phenomenon that the women studied here position themselves in the wider political, social and cultural context associated with Eastern Germany. For

my informants, their experiences as East German women who have worked most of their lives constitute a significant part of their lives so far. However, each individual articulates her own position on work differently: While she may not necessarily locate herself merely in the single context of Eastern Germany, she may do so in the various dimensions marked by the interweaving of ethnicity, gender and religion. Differences therefore stand out between the various women in this study.

In terms of women's ideas toward child-rearing, various elements interrelate with one another and appear in simultaneity. For instance, multi-cultures (Sorbian, Polish and German) are the embodiment of enrichment and are accorded high value in Lydia's family. Team spirit, the ability to communicate and independence were also valued and promoted in socialism. According to Angela's values for her children, the safeguarding and development of the Sorbian language and fostering a "we-feeling" and solidarity are accorded importance. This expresses an interconnection of a double legacy of Sorbian-ness and socialism. Moreover, the women studied mention many other elementary and universal notions of value orientation for children, such as honesty, reliability, environmental consciousness, an awareness of nature, emotional and spiritual life, art and music education, freedom and open-mindedness. In this sense, particular types of belonging, Sorbian or German, may play a less significant role or recede into the background, and the pluralization of the contexts of social life may instead come to the foreground.

In other fields of ordinary life, we also see that women's identity formations are molded in various confluences among different constituents. Their experiences of going on vacation explore a combination of Sorbian descent and the *DDR* past and occupy a major space in their choices of travel and holiday destinations. In still other areas of everyday life, such as media consumption and making music, women variably construct their identities through different factors, be they ethnicity, gender, occupation, age, or political and social contexts. What is more, the various forms of their media reception, e.g. newspaper, novels, radio, television and music appreciation, manifest themselves in a process in which they locate themselves in a dynamic and plural way. The sheer profusion of identities and selves that my informants possess not only disrupt the linear relationship between culture, territory and people, but also explore women's experiences with "disembedding" and "deterritorializing" by means of their connecting with "absent" others from afar in late-modernity.

As shown in the various instances above, the heterogeneity of everyday practices constructs a putative homogenous Sorbian people in the Sorbian discourse, conflating people, culture, ethnicity, ethnic identity and territory into a oneness, into a question. Moreover, the multiplicity of life experiences breaks the assumed linear equation between group, culture, ethnicity and identity in which those studied are fixed. This forces us to rethink the definition of these terms because people are neither passive bearers of culture, nor are they imprisoned in a distinctive, isolated group or ascribed only one identity, where cultural identity and ethnic identity are considered one and the same. Instead, people are seen as acting agents who are able to cope with life. This is also the central point in *So Langsam wird's Zeit* (1994), in which culture is understood as "a strategy for coping with life"(Chapter 2.4.2.1). Furthermore, to borrow from Römhild (1998), when culture is not conceptualized as "*Kulturgebundenheit*" (culture boundedness) and as a component and an expression of a group of people, but rather as

rather "*Kulturfähigkeit*" (culture ability) (1998: 9), then people are rendered as actors with the ability to actively deal with their environment. There is a human ability to learn; that is to say, each human is not fixed in his/her "nature" in the sense of an innate genetic furnishing (ibid.). As to ability, culture not only reproduces what is monadically given, but it is also able to change it and further develop it consciously in the exchange with other people (ibid.). In this sense, culture is the ability to communicate and interact across borders and is based on everyday practices not confined in the context of a singular ethnic group (1998: 12f.).

Drawing on the research results in my study, the everyday practices keep those studied from being fossilized as the bearers of the essentialized and homogenized Sorbian culture. Internal difference – i.e. different social groups, different gender, age, class, religion, occupation, membership in different associations, different political orientation, etc. – within this assumed unified ethnic collectivity will be therefore revealed. Among other things, female gender is of particular relevance to my study. This has to do with the ethnic and nationalist processes in which women are made the key symbols loaded with "forced" Sorbian identities and ascribed certain responsibilities for the sake of their ethnic group. Gender relations are naturalized, objectified and hierarchized in nationalist projects. In this sense, gender difference (difference between genders, difference within gender) is veiled and gender is seen as a unitary, homogenous category. Under such circumstances, gendered life worlds, gendered life experiences and gendered social relations recede into the background. However, highlighting the life experiences and life worlds of those studied is exactly what I have endeavored to do in this study in order to show that women, as acting agents, are able to actively construct their identities in different life contexts and in various situations. In this light, the essentialism in ethnicity and gender is shattered by their life experiences and everyday practices. The rich diversity of their identities is formed in their lives which are interwoven in a complex blending of their individual biographies, collective histories, cultural experiences, social interactions and political developments. Such abundant multiplicities of identities and the precise positionings of those studied encourage a further broadening of the discourse of gender, particularly as theoretical and empirical investigations on gender are scarce in the Sorbian field.

In this study, gender is not naturalized as a biological given, but is rather understood a social construct that is not fixed as an essence, but varies in different contexts. Therefore it is important to observe gender in practices and life experiences, while taking external structures and systems into consideration at the same time. Moreover, since gender is regarded from the point of view of life experiences and practices, it is no longer possible to see gender as an isolated category, but rather as a relational category intersecting with other social categories, such as ethnicity, "race", and class. This means that the other categories are also gendered. Through the "intersectionality" between gender, ethnicity and other social categories, the women studied are no longer persistently confined in any one category and are seen as static and ahistorical. Multiple positionings are reached in gender processes which fluctuate according to ethnicity, race, class, nationality, religion, sexual orientation and so on (see Bradley 2007, Bradley & Healy 2008, Walgenbach 2007). Gender is not only a relational category, gender also configurates different categories in itself. As illustrated in various case studies, the women studied not only live as women, but they also are

bound to other different social categories (e.g. ethnicity, religion, class and nationality). For instance, Paula experiences her life not only as a Sorb, a Catholic and a worker on the *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft*, but also as a farmer who grew vegetables and raised livestock for household consumption (Chapter 4.1.1). Vera, a single mother of a handicapped son, also experiences what it is like to receive unequal pay for equal work in her occupation as playwright, an inequality that is not only between women and men, but also between Sorbs and Germans (Chapter 4.1.4). More importantly, for most women studied in this book, the difference between socialism and post-socialism also plays a role in their life experiences and the construction of identities, particularly in terms of womanhood and motherhood (Chapter 5.3.3). This difference is also articulated in their confrontation with women from Western Germany. All theses differences, which fluctuate in weight according to time, place and life context, are variously integrated in women's lives. In this light, I shall argue that the women studied are actually a heterogeneous social group whose experiences in everyday life are portrayed not only through certain similarities but also crucial differences.

To sum up, the various cases of women's everyday practices and life experiences in this study show how the concepts of Sorb, Sorbian women, Sorbian culture and Sorbian identity have been homogenized as an ahistorical, bounded and coherent essence in the past and are rethought and redefined here as renewed conceptions imbued with difference, diversity, and dynamism. Identity construction always involves relations to the Other. Those studied have therefore never lived as an isolated group. In their heterogeneous everyday practices, the women in this study inhabit articulating and changing identities which intermingle across differences of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion and class. Their lives, codified in their individual biographies and variably contextualized in collective histories, cultural experiences, social interactions and political developments, spell out the abundant multiplicity of meanings in the process of identity construction. The day-to-day life practices and experiences of those studied not only reflect how they may variously or simultaneously identify themselves as Sorbs, Germans, East German women, mothers, single mothers, members of particular social associations, feminists, artists, readers of specific literature, or fans of certain kinds of music, but also how the ambivalences, paradoxes, connections and imbrications are involved in their sense of self and are linked to the processes and paths of becoming women who locate themselves in interweaving layers of multiple positionings.

Last but not least, I would like to conclude this study by tracing back to the point of departure where I began this journey with the Sorbs: my own experience as a member of an ethnic minority in my country. During my talks and interactions with those studied, this ethnic sense of belonging which was originally thought to be in the foreground was not always dominant. It was rather other realms of life experiences that connected us, while still others divided us, depending on what contexts or situations we were located in, or which topics we discussed with one another. For instance, my life experience as a married woman was a connection I shared with most of the women I interviewed, but my hesitation to have children because I am studying abroad, or because of my age, or because I would then want to take care of children by myself disconnected me from the women who experienced work and family at the same time. Another example is that I shared experiences with those who also went abroad to study

for short terms, for example, one of my informants visited the same places in the US as I did. In sum, ethnicity was my initial motivation for researching the Sorbs, but as my research journey continued, and as I was interacting with the group in question, reading and reviewing the related theoretical and empirical studies on ethnicity, gender and identity construction, and as I was following reports on the Sorbs in the media (mostly in the newspaper, Internet, and sometimes on television), it became clear that the women I was researching were definitely not as confined to their "Sorbian" life world as they are perceived in Sorbian cultural discourses and as they are represented in the press, informational books and tourist brochures. Instead, they are located in a pluralization of life worlds. The point of view of practice is the key to understanding all of this. With a focus on agency, those studied are able to cross cultural boundaries and to liberate themselves from the limitations set up by the Sorbian nationalist and ethnic projects. Moreover, these women are acting agents who are able to change, construct, redefine and transform cultures. This helped me to understand the conceptions of culture, ethnicity, gender and identity construction in a new way by reconnecting myself with the ethnic group I belong to in my country. This return journey is not only accompanied by but also propelled by a comparison between those studied and myself, between the Sorbs in Germany and the Hakka in Taiwan, and between our life experiences in a variety of dimensions. At this moment, the transference of the research results of this study to similar cases has already begun.

APPENDIX

The following biographical facts of interviewees relate to the time I interviewed them. All the names have been changed in order to preserve confidentiality.

Angela, 51 years old, comes from a Catholic Sorbian family in Upper Lusatia. She is married to a Sorb and they have three children. She teaches at a Sorbian secondary school in Bautzen.

Anita, 24 years old, was born in a Catholic Sorbian family in Croswitz, Upper Lusatia. She has two sisters. She studies at the Humboldt University of Berlin.

Birgit, 56, is from a Catholic Sorbian family in Upper Lusatia. She went to Dresden in 1968 for training as nurse. Later she married a Catholic Sorb and now lives in Dresden. She worked as nurse for almost 30 years and has been running a chain of bakeries with her husband since 1997.

Edith, 44 years old, is an artist. She learned Sorbian from her father, who came from an Upper Lusatian village. Her mother, who came from a Lower Lusatian village, also spoke Sorbian herself but did not speak it with her children. Her ex-husband is of Sorbian descent. She has one son.

Elenore, 52, is a poet, is married to a German-speaking Sorb, and has one child.

Emma, 33 years old, was born in Drehnow, Lower Lusatia. She had ecclesiastical training and taught religious education at a secondary school in Berlin. She also majored in Slavonic studies. She currently works for the local government in Cottbus.

Erika, 73, is a retired widow. She has three daughters. She used to be a teacher.

Franziska, 31, is a nurse, is married, and has no children. She was born in a Catholic Sorbian family in Croswitz. She has lived in Berlin since 1991.

Frauke, 53 years old, was born in a Catholic Sorbian family in Nucknitz, Upper Lusatia. She used to teach Sorbian and Russian. After marrying her husband, who comes from a German family in Dresden, she moved to Dresden and taught Russian at a school there until 1986. She currently works at a kindergarten in Dresden. She has four children.

Gabriella, 34, is a company employee. She is German and her ex-husband is a Sorb. She has one daughter and one son who attends a WITAJ kindergarten.

Heike, 44, is an artist with two children. She was born and grew up in a Sorbian family and has a moderate knowledge of Sorbian.

Helga, 68 years old, is single and a scientist. She comes from a Sorbian family in Upper Lusatia. She has been living in Dresden for over 40 years. Helga actively organizes Sorbian affairs for the Sorbs in Dresden, e.g. *Sorbentreff*.

Ina, 34 years old, is an artist and is married to a Sorb. She grew up in Leipzig and went to study at the Sorbian secondary school in Bautzen and then moved to Berlin to study at the university. Since then she has been living in Berlin.

Johanna, 41, grew up in a Sorbian-German family near Dresden and then moved to study at the Sorbian unified comprehensive school (now called the Sorbisches Gymnasium) in Bautzen. She lives in Bautzen. She works as freelance teacher and is also doing her PhD in Dresden.

Julia, 19 years old, was born in a Sorbian-German family. She is trainee in the field of ergotherapy in Leipzig.

Klara, 18, is a trainee in Görlitz.

Lydia, 49 years old, was born in a Protestant German family in Lower Lusatia. She learned Sorbian at school. She married a Catholic Sorb whose father was Sorbian and whose mother was from Poland. Lydia and her husband have three sons. She is a civil servant in Leipzig.

Maria, 57, is from a Sorbian family. Her husband is also of Sorbian descent and they have three children. Maria and her husband run a bakery in Bautzen.

Martina, 65 years old, comes from a Lower Sorbian family. She taught Sorbian in Cottbus and was also involved in the establishment of WITAJ kindergarten in Sielow. She currently teaches German as a foreign language in Dresden. She has two daughters.

Mathilde, 64, was school teacher and retired in 1999. She was born and brought up in a Catholic Sorbian family in Upper Lusatia. She has been living in Dresden over 40 years. Her husband is a German-speaking German and they have two children.

Miriam, 21, was born in a German-Sorbian family. She is studying education in Cottbus.

Paula, 76, worked for a *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft* (*LPG*, or a collective farm) for most of her life.

Petra, 56, is married to a Sorb and has two children. She was born in Potsdam. She worked in the theater in Bautzen since 1977. She is currently unemployed.

Rosemarie, roughly 50 years old, organizes singing events for a Sorbian group. She currently lives in Panshwitz-Kukow

Sonja, 28 years old, is married and is a secondary school teacher in Bautzen.

Vanessa, 17, is a school student in Kamenz.

Vera, 46 years old, is a teacher of Sorbian and an editor. She is a single mother with one son. She was born in a German-speaking family, probably of Sorbian ancestry, in Lower Lusatia. She lives in Cottbus. She has been learning Sorbian since childhood and is involved in teaching Sorbian.

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